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Community Supported Agriculture

Sustainability, Community and New Relationships with Food?

Community Supported Agriculture: Sustainability, Community and New Relationships with Food?

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Abstract

It is argued that the recent industrialisation and homogenisation of agricultural production has distanced food system participants from one another, creating increasingly individualistic, unfamiliar and compartmentalised food systems. It is in this context that demand for locally sourced, sustainable food provisioning has come to the fore. Current agri-food literature continues to perpetuate problematic dualisms, including nature/culture, alternative/conventional, local/global, and producer/consumer. This masks the heterogeneity of sustainability concerns, not addressing their complexity. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) encourages and drives sustainable food provisioning, whilst aiming to bring together communities. This thesis explores how CSA may bring about sustainable values by educating members through their practices. It attempts to characterise expressions of care in CSA farms, and how they may bring communities together to strengthen food system durability. A mixed-method analysis comprising interviews, participant observation, directives, and discourse analysis explores the narratives of CSA members and farms. A tapestry approach is used to weave these narratives together, forming an understanding of the processes and practices occurring. This thesis finds that through CSA farm involvement, members became producers in their own right, bridging divisions in understanding surrounding agriculture and sustainability, alongside the accompanying dualisms. CSA farm involvement brought communities together and helped members forge new relationships with food. Thus, members better recognised the need for sustainable agriculture, which fostered commitments to more sustainable lifestyles. Future research should recognise the heterogeneity of member experiences at different CSA farms, to fully understand these complex spaces. Further studies should examine the barriers to diversity within CSA farms to broaden accessibility to sustainable and culturally appropriate food.

COVID-19 Statement of Disruption

The introduction of a national lockdown resulted in cancellation of 13 planned days of participant observation, volunteering at three different CSA farms. These were organised for the following dates:

- February 19th 2020
- March 18th 2020
- March 27th 2020
- March 28th 2020
- April 1st 2020
- April 3rd 2020
- April 8th 2020
- April 10th 2020
- April 15th 2020
- April 17th 2020
- April 22nd 2020
- April 24th 2020
- April 25th 2020

As a result of the cancellation of the planned participant observation days, and the inability to organise further visits owing to the continuation of the national lockdown, this data collection method was no longer viable.

The increased demand for CSA produce, and the additional pressure placed on the CSA farms due to this, resulted in limited access to information provided by the farms. In addition, the CSA farms prevented access to the public to ensure the safety and health of their staff. This lack of access, alongside the diminished response the farms themselves owing to the demand for CSA produce, made accessing research participants challenging.

The lack of access to libraries during the 2020 national lockdowns hindered the progress of this research, as access to certain books was not possible. This was a particular hindrance during the formulation of a new methodology, where access to books would have benefitted the re-design of the research. Furthermore, the lack of access to study space proved challenging to the ability to conduct desk-based research effectively and efficiently.

The thesis originally intended to utilise an ethnographic approach in order to employ the theories and concepts of actor network theory, tactile space and visceral geographies. In such research it is vital for researchers to experience the activity which is being investigated. However, the inability

to conduct an extensive series of participant observation visits at the different CSA farms prevented an ethnographic understanding of the farms from the researcher's perspective.

Face-to-face interviews with CSA participants were originally intended to take place following participant observation visits at the farms. However, this approach was unfeasible owing to the inability to physically access the CSA farms. This then presented the dual challenge of not being able to perform the interviews in a face-to-face capacity, and a reduction in the number of research participants accessed. The interviews organised were, instead, undertaken using Zoom Video Conferencing software. This meant that body language and social cues of participants could not be interpreted as readily. Furthermore, the relationships and interactions which can develop through face-to-face interviews were diminished as this could not be achieved using online video conferencing.

The inability to utilise an ethnographic approach meant that it was necessary to find a method of accessing sensory data whilst not being able to access the farms physically. This affected the ability of this thesis to employ the theories and concepts of visceral geographies, tactile space and actor network theory to fully understand the how CSA spaces could influence their participants in an embodied, physical way. As a result, this thesis has used directives to access this data instead. Directives can encourage their members to impart their sensorial memories of CSA farms. Hence, instead of the researcher experiencing these processes for themselves, it was contingent upon existing CSA members to provide this data. Although effective, this was ultimately reliant on the members delivering detailed and extensive responses and accounts (which was not always the case). The distance of the method also resulted in the inability to encourage participants to elaborate on their responses in real time.

The re-design of the methods utilised within the thesis did result in the asymmetric consideration of the different farm locations chosen to examine. Thus, the data collected from the different farms differed in volume to varying extents. The use of a tapestry approach within the data analysis was necessary for mitigating the potential effects of this on the subsequent understandings of the processes and practices occurring at the CSA farms.

Author’s Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: [redacted] DATE: 01/04/2021

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1. Introduction

The 2011 Foresight report exploring the future of food and farming in the UK concluded that current food production is unsustainable. Although increasingly industrial and globalised food networks can support larger populations, there are significant risks concerning quality and safety that accompany this (Dong et al., 2019). UK food systems must, therefore, be rethought to encompass a more sustainable, community-led approach. In a 2019 study of 'Sustainable Food Systems for a Healthier UK', Bash and Donnelly state that one solution could be to "*Promote and support community-based agriculture schemes that bring farming and green spaces into urban and peri-urban environments and provide open access and exposure to green spaces for members of the local community"* (p. 2). Thus, investigation into these schemes as a viable solution is essential.

In recent years, agricultural production in the UK has caused significant loss of biodiversity, groundwater and soil contamination, soil erosion and antibiotic resistance (Boatman et al., 2007; Boardman, 2013). Landscapes have been transformed by monocropping, reducing the diversity and variety of crops (Lacy, 2000). The growth of intensified agriculture has been paired with a desire to accelerate its biological yield potential, meaning that food has increasingly defied its spatio-temporal constraints through technological innovation (Buttel, 1997). With a limit to the extent of agricultural biological productivity, paired with more demand for a continuous flow of out-of-season produce, feeding future populations remains a significant challenge (Goodman and Redclift, 1994). According to Farnsworth et al. (1996), this agricultural intensification, reliance on pesticides, and the concentration of power in agri-food systems by large scale corporations has revealed a greater need to explore different avenues of food production.

In addition to these challenges, climate change threatens to influence weather patterns. Warmer temperatures and changes to rainfall and pollution patterns have the potential to reduce crop productivity, threatening the durability of global food systems (Wheeler and Von Braun, 2013, cited in Bash and Donelly, 2019). Agriculture contributes to 26% of global anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (US EPA, 2018). As the UK Committee on Climate Change is championing a transition to a net zero economy, changes to UK food systems are vital (Bash and Donelly, 2019). Innovation in production, distribution and consumption will be necessary in order to generate effective and durable change (Gill et al., 2018).

Defining what constitutes sustainable agricultural production has become complicated where popular arguments and narratives have become misconstrued. For example, food miles are too simplistic an indicator of GHG emissions and energy use to identify environmental footprints on a global scale (McWilliams, 2009, cited in Schnell, 2013). Food miles differ between means of transport, contingent upon factors such as fuel efficiency and carrying capacity (Pirog et al., 2001; Schönhart et

al., 2009). Although Schnell (2013) explains that more emissions are produced through food production than transport, Weber et al. (2009, cited in Bash and Donelly, 2019) estimate that food transportation contributes to 10% of the overall GHG emission footprint, a significant proportion. It is essential to recognise these tensions which make sustainability a complex challenge.

Food system sustainability has multiple, varied and contested meanings. However, explorations of 'alternative' food networks (AFNs) have focussed on sustainability, mainly through exploring the single dimension of *environmental* impacts (Agyeman and Evans, 2004). Furthermore, they are angled according towards the author's interests (Maxey, 2007), neglecting factors such as the sociocultural implications of industrialised and homogenised agriculture (Farnsworth et al., 1996). Hence, interdisciplinary approaches which acknowledge the multifaceted nature of sustainability in food systems are required (O'Hara and Stagl, 2001).

The recent growth of industrialised food systems has also posed challenges to economic sustainability. The concentration of economic control in fewer companies has drawn the economic control of markets away from both producers and consumers, distancing the two through more complex food chains (Welsh and MacRae, 1998). Additionally, it is often claimed that the increasingly fast-paced nature of human life has provoked accelerated consumerism and a greater demand for fast-food service technologies which requires agricultural intensification (Crocker and Chiveralls, 2018). Thus, food systems have become reliant on monetary institutions and technological advancements, removing market exchanges from social interactions and interpersonal ties (O'Hara and Stagl, 2001).

The ubiquity of year-round fresh produce is often taken for granted (Brown et al., 2014). Until the 19th century, much of the UK was familiar with agriculture, having seen it in close quarters. However, urbanisation reduced the proportion of the population directly involved with agriculture (Colquhoun and Lyon, 2001). The centralisation of agri-food systems around fewer, large, homogenised farms and corporations has disconnected and distanced consumers from their food (Lacy, 2000). This has largely prevented the public from connecting their consumption habits to their concerns surrounding sustainability.

It is important not to demonise global food systems: they have unarguably provided security for food-insecure communities worldwide (Brown et al., 2014). However, participation in global food systems is claimed to have disempowered both consumers and producers (Freidman, 1993). Decreased trust and transparency in UK food systems, characterised by the horsemeat and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) scandals, have given rise to calls to reconnect producers and consumers. Exploring modes of food provisioning which provide alterity from mainstream supermarket models is, thereby, essential.

The expansion of the internet and online community, which Bauman (2000, cited in Ravenscroft et al., 2012, p.4) considers as "*decentring the solidity of space*", has rendered local communities increasingly redundant (Beck, 1992, cited in Ravenscroft et al., 2012). Physical proximity now plays a smaller role in shaping communities. A growth of financial independence and a reduced reliance on neighbours is widely identified as resulting in more individualism and declining prevalence of local communities (Goldthorpe et al., 1969, cited in Ravenscroft et al., 2012). Therefore, common experiences which constitute communities, formed through social connections to (and within) space and place, have been gradually lost (Lacy, 2000).

Modes of food provisioning such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) provide a different option from purchasing supermarket produce. In CSA farms, members of the public are involved with food production "*through ownership or investment in the farm or business, sharing the costs of production, accepting a share in the harvest or providing labour*" (Soil Association, 2019). It presents a sustainable option for obtaining food, simultaneously connecting members of communities.

Human relationships with food and agriculture are heterogeneous and dynamic but are often characterised by binary thinking (Maxey, 2007). Although much agri-food literature has progressed from considering food systems through dualistic framings, there is still the potential to move further beyond them. Additionally, agri-food literature continues to consider concepts like producers and consumers, and alternative and conventional through separate framings. Given the overlapping and interacting characteristics of CSA networks, binary framings fail to capture the multifaceted processes occur within CSA farms. Attempting to understand CSA beyond these binary framings is essential.

As such, the aims and objectives of this project are as follows:

- To what extent can participating in a CSA farm facilitate a greater awareness of sustainability issues?
- To what extent can CSA farms form caring communities?
- To what extent does CSA cut across the binary thinking that often characterizes considerations of food systems?

1.1 Thesis Structure

1.1.1 Agri-food Systems and CSA

The thesis first introduces readers to the literature concerning the desire for populations to reconnect with food systems. It explores how consumers have become epistemologically distanced from food production, calling for greater trust and transparency in UK food systems. Following this, the history of CSA and how it has developed in the UK is examined, looking at how it can be viewed as a solution to increasingly distanced food systems. This includes the extent to which it can be an environmentally sustainable solution, empower communities, be an economically conscious choice, and improve transparency and trust. It then examines the accessibility of CSA farms.

Following this, the literature review examines the dualistic framings of certain concepts in agri-food literature, such as 'global' and 'local'. Although this notion has been extensively examined previously, it is important to situate this thesis in these arguments. It explores dualisms including alternative and conventional, nature and culture (in agricultural spaces), and tensions in the producer and consumer focus.

The thesis then looks at the different caring practices previously identified in CSA farms. These include a relational feminist ethic of care, a sense of caring stewardship, and therapeutic caring practices. It explores how these may intersect and overlap to form caring communities.

Finally, the literature review looks at the role of actor network theory (ANT) in moving beyond dualistic framings of agri-food concepts. After this, it examines how Michael Carolan's tactile space may help to explore the role of 'doing' in informing environmentally conscious attitudes. It then investigates the visceral food geographies pioneered by Jessica and Alison Hayes-Conroy, ultimately looking at how examining CSA farms' social media presence can help to understand CSA member experience. The thesis then details the research questions formulated in response to the literature explored.

1.1.2 CSA: Formulating a Research Strategy

The methodology first sets out the selection of locations and CSA farms, outlining how participants were recruited for the project. Next, the choice of methods is explained, detailing the original methods of participant observation and face-to-face interviews. Following this, the additional methods selected (owing to the COVID-19 pandemic) are described, including directives and the discourse analysis of Facebook posts. For each, the methodology outlines the rationale behind their selection, and how they were designed and conducted.

Finally, the methodology explores the ethical issues considered. It then covers how the data were analysed using a 'tapestry' approach, after which it explores the limitations, and the strategies used to mitigate them.

1.1.3 Learning, Growing, Caring, Eating

The analysis first explores how volunteering can generate better understandings of food production and empower members to become producers themselves. It then examines how, through teaching members about food production, CSA can be an educational tool, facilitating sensory and material connections to nonhumans and landscapes. Next, the section investigates how this can reconnect members to food production, leading this thesis to challenge narratives of disconnection present in agri-food literature. Following this, the analysis examines how moving beyond the labels of producer and consumer when considering CSA can disrupt problematic power relations in food systems, providing agency to all members. Finally, this section accounts for the challenges that may arise out of this relationship, revealing that to remain durable, CSA farms must afford members flexibility. Concurrently, it acknowledges the potential for CSA farms to provide spaces for skill sharing and innovation, shown through a case study of the impact of COVID-19 in the UK.

The next section explores how different caring practices, and a sense of community can emerge through CSA farms. It first examines why members perceive care and community to be important. Next, the analysis investigates how commitments to CSA may be fostered and developed, in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment through a relational ethic of care and place-based communities formed through caring stewardship. It then looks at how like-minded communities may foster sustainable values, which extend to others outside the farms. The section then questions the extent to which CSA farms enable accessibility and inclusivity. The analysis examines how therapeutic caring practices contribute to the health and wellbeing of CSA communities. Following this, the norms and dynamics present in CSA farms, and how these may manifest in difficulties are explored. Examples of the challenges to maintaining communities during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate this.

Finally, the analysis explores how CSA farms may encourage members to forge new relationships with food through more involvement in its lifecycle, from producing to eating it. The section first examines how CSA farms educate members on the relationship between food and sustainability. After this, it investigates how deeper understandings of food from seed to table can form, including recognising its seasonality, and negotiating instances of abundance and scarcity. The thesis then looks at member's differing relationships with quality, finally exploring the effect of this on how CSA members purchase their produce.

Chapter 2: Agri-food Systems and CSA

2.1 Introduction

The view that humans need to reconnect with nature and food production dates to the Nature-Study Movement in the late 1800s. The Nature-Study Movement was an effort to engage students with agriculture and food production (Carolan, 2011). Originally it was criticised for being anti-modern and regressive (Deloria, 1999, cited in Carolan, 2011). However, consumers have more recently expressed a desire to reconnect with food production (Kneafsey et al., 2008). It is argued that the modern industrialisation of food production systems has disempowered producers and consumers, disconnecting them from each other. Furthermore, health and nutritional concerns arising from a greater prevalence of ultra-processed foods have prompted calls to fundamentally rethink UK food systems (DeLind, 2003).

Ilbery and Maye (2005, p.823) posit that AFNs have emerged as: *"a consequence of consumer reactions to a range of environmental, ethical and health concerns which are associated with 'conventional' food supply systems that have become increasingly industrialised and global in reach".* They enable both producers and consumers to express conscious resistance to dominant food systems, which can, in turn, change to how food moves from seed to table.

This literature review first explores a brief history of CSA and how it has presented potential solutions to the problems associated with mainstream hegemonic food systems. These include environmental solutions, how they may empower communities and individuals (both socially and economically) and improve food system trust and transparency. It then examines the extent to which CSA farms provide accessibility. Following this, the literature review investigates common dualisms present in UK food systems research, including local/global, alternative/conventional, nature/culture and producer/consumer. It is essential to explore the extent to which these are embedded in food systems research to move beyond them in creating more inclusive and holistic food production methods. It then explores the types of caring practices present in CSA farms, and how they aid community formation. These include a relational, feminist ethic of care, a sense of caring stewardship, and therapeutic caring practices, examining how these may intersect and interact. It then details the theories that will be employed to understand the processes and practices occurring in CSA farms. This includes exploring actor network theory, how Carolan's tactile space can inform deeper connections with the environment, and visceral food geographies. Finally, the literature review acknowledges how online spaces have, more recently, played a role in CSA.

2.2 Disconnection from Food?

2.2.1 Epistemic Distance

It is argued that the increasing centralisation of agri-food systems around fewer, larger farms and corporations has disconnected and distanced UK consumers from their food (Lacy, 2000). Buttel (1997, cited in O'Hara and Stagl, 2001, p.541) explains that this impacts sustainability, causing a "*temporal and spatial disconnect between the source and the effec*t". This has severed connections between the environment and society (Bateson, 1972), exacerbated by urbanization through which, Macnaghten (2003) suggests, individuals have become separated from the natural world. Many vegetables are picked, washed and packaged before they leave their fields, masking the connection between agricultural production and consumption. This means that "*commodity chains remain epistemologically distant"* to many consumers (Carolan, 2007, p.1265). This disjunction between the perceived causes and effects of environmental issues in relation to human actions is termed the "*phenomena of epistemic distance*" (Carolan, 2006). Sundkvist et al. (2005) suggest that there are different forms of this relationship: masked feedback, whereby effects are hidden, instances where no feedback is perceived, and those where it is disregarded, being perceived but not acted upon.

Epistemic distance results from the diminishing rich connection between humans and space (Schnell, 2013). This can provoke what O'Hara and Stagl (2001) term, a loss of ethical and moral embeddedness: as people become disconnected from their food and the spaces in which it is produced, they increasingly lack ethical investment in it. Although individuals may express environmentally conscious attitudes, these may not translate into behaviours or actions as the relationship lacks depth (Carolan, 2007). This has been termed the value-action gap (Blake, 1999).

Aligning consumer concerns for the environment with their consumption choices, therefore, remains a significant challenge (Sundkvist et al., 2005). Epistemic distance describes how consumers perceive the impact of their actions, for example, how eating out-of-season food influences environmental sustainability. Increased demand for year-round produce and food system intensification arguably masks agriculture's cyclical characteristics (Colquhoun and Lyon, 2001). Understanding factors such as seasonality is crucial to recognizing the influence of purchasing habits on the environment (Colquhoun and Lyon, 2001). Although we cannot expect all elements of food systems to be visible, acknowledging these relationships can highlight how societies relate environmental challenges to food production (Carolan, 2007).

2.2.2 Trust and Transparency

Epistemic distance can undermine trust, which is fundamental to how food systems operate (O'Hara and Stagl, 2001). Trust in food systems has been of longstanding concern, Habermas's (1975)

legitimation crisis explaining a loss of faith in food networks. Trust can be defined as the "*confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given a set of outcomes or events*" (Giddens, 1990, p.34). Kjærnes (2006) suggests that mechanisms of trust are socially and politically embedded, emerging out of individual experiences and responsibilities. The rise of the packaging and processing industries has diminished food system transparency (Wilkinson, 1986), with recent scares such as the horsemeat scandal reducing public trust in food systems. According to Welsh and MacRae (1998), trust and transparency are embedded in relationships of power and agency; if consumers are provided with limited information, corporations can direct their decision making. Feelings of disempowerment in food systems are, therefore, often associated with a desire to find modes of food provisioning which offer greater transparency.

2.3 How has CSA Emerged in the UK?

The history of CSA has been covered widely and as such, it is only necessary to provide a brief overview of its history to date (Kolodinsky and Pelch, 1997; Schnell, 2007; Charles, 2011; Paul, 2019). CSA originated in Japan in the 1960s, started by a group of women who were dissatisfied with their food, as they became progressively physically and socially distanced from its production. They set up a direct arrangement with a farmer to get fresh, local produce. The word used for this arrangement (*teikei*) means 'farming with a face' emphasising the closer connection between producers and consumers in this relationship which underlines CSA today (Schnell, 2007).

CSA emerges from values which align with those of food sovereignty (Ayres and Bosia, 2011). In line with the UN Sustainable Development goals, particularly Goal 2 for Zero Hunger, food sovereignty advocates rights for people to be able to make decisions over their food to be more sustainable and culturally appropriate (UN, 2015). Central to this is that food is for people, not just a market mechanism for profit; it also employs an agro-ecological approach which encourages working alongside nature, not against it (Patel, 2009). In response to globalisation, food sovereignty encourages re-localisation to resist hegemonic global agribusiness, empowering both consumers and producers to grow their own food, or to eat local food, reinforcing their autonomy in food systems (Ayres and Bosia, 2011). Exemplifying these principles are projects such as CSA, which aim to connect producers with co-producers, and defend biodiversity in food supply chains.

CSA directly reconnects people with food production (Kolodinsky and Pelch, 1997). Today in the UK, CSA occupies a diverse range of enterprises operating at varying scales, but typically takes the form of direct marketing arrangements. At the start of the growing season, customers buy 'shares' from a farm, allowing farmers to purchase the equipment needed for cultivation (ibid.). Throughout the growing season, customers benefit from a weekly share of produce (Stone, 1988). This mitigates

the risks taken on by producers, given the uncertainty of food production (Kolodinsky and Pelch, 1997).

More recently, a greater recognition of the need for "*health and nutrition, food safety and sustainability, and local economic development*" (Martinez et al., 2010, cited in Dong et al., 2019, p.1) has surfaced. Simultaneously, concerns for the impacts of food production on the environment (Vassalos et al., 2017) mean that more people are making conscious food choices, demanding locally sourced produce (Osteen et al., 2012, cited in Peterson et al., 2015). Engaging both producers and consumers across multiple aspects of sustainability, CSA has become a form of ethical consumerism (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007). Therefore, CSA in the UK is growing, expanding from 50 to 80 farms in the UK from 2011 to 2016, out of a greater desire for ethically sourced, environmentally friendly produce, and closer connections to those producing it.

2.4 CSA: A Solution to the Problems of Increasingly Distanced Food Systems?

Sustainability lies at the centre of engendering long-term, effective change in currently unsustainable UK food systems (Marsden, 2003). However, there has been a reluctance amongst scholars to interrogate the term 'sustainability' (Gibbs and Kreuger, 2005). Johnston et al. (2007) estimate that there are over 300 definitions of sustainability, making identifying a comprehensive definition challenging. Sustainability is often viewed as an overarching unchallenged force for good (Maxey, 2007) meaning that alternatives to the term are not explored (ibid.). Maxey (2007) expresses concern that sustainability could become defined in a binary framework in opposition to unsustainability, masking the complexity of the issues to which it refers. However, he explains that it should (at least) encompass environmental, economic, and socio-cultural factors, being seen as processual and ongoing, rather than an end goal (Maxey, 2006). Thus, in order to examine such a multifaceted subject, an interdisciplinary approach is required, involving the overarching concerns for multiple aspects of sustainability (Pothkuchi, 2004).

2.4.1 CSA: An Environmentally Sustainable Alternative?

The question of whether local food is more environmentally sustainable is disputed. Local farms using year-round heated greenhouses to produce unseasonal fruit and vegetables can be more energy intensive, producing higher GHG emissions (Carlsson and Kanyama, 1998, cited in Schönhart et al., 2009). It is, therefore, important to acknowledge the contentions in local food arguments. Webb et al. (2013) find that vegetables grown in the Mediterranean and sold in the UK have lower GHG emissions than those grown in the UK. If local demand increases, land may be farmed more intensively, resulting in negative environmental effects (Schönhart et al., 2009). Although the land for

CSA farms can be cultivated more intensively, their methods often employ sustainable concepts such as organic farming, agro-ecology, protecting local biodiversity, and growing seasonal produce (Schönhart et al., 2009; Soil Association, 2020).

Reconnecting people with their food and empowering them to grow their own, allows them to be less reliant on supermarket produce (Wells et al., 1999). Through growing their own food, members may better understand aspects of food production such as seasonality. However, the seasonal nature of CSA farms may not be able to provide the year-round variety of produce needed to maintain a healthy and nutritious diet (Schönhart et al., 2009).

Many CSA farms educate their members on preserving the natural environment to engage them in ideological commitments to more sustainable lifestyles (Ostrom, 2007). Cox et al. (2008) explore what they term the 'graduation effect', whereby members become more aware of, and motivated by, environmental concerns during their involvement. They find that individuals eat more in-season vegetables and reduce their packaging use throughout their membership (Cox et al., 2008). Additionally, members may recognise the connection between the environment and food, reducing epistemic distance (Wells and Gradwell, 2001), so that they reconsider their everyday behaviours and lifestyle choices (Cox et al., 2008). However, Vassalos et al. (2017) question the role of CSA in generating this change, many members caring for the environment before their involvement. It is, therefore, necessary to explore the extent to which CSA farms may produce these attitudes.

2.4.2 Can CSA Empower Communities?

The notion of community is central to CSA's objectives and key to its durability. Farnsworth et al. (1996) stress the importance of re-establishing relationships between producers and consumers. Social networks produced by CSA farms allow members to 'put a face to' products enabling greater transparency, encouraging people to join (Ostrom, 2007). This is significant in urban areas where members may perceive agriculture to be a distant other (Pole and Gray, 2013). According to Carolan (2011), the formation of a strong community, reliant on mutual beliefs, knowledge and assumptions is essential for developing robust food networks. Multiple studies have concluded that CSA farms strengthen a sense of community in a locality, forming durable connections between individuals (Ostrom, 1997; Lacy, 2000; Cone and Myhre, 2000; Brehm and Eisenhauer, 2008; Feagan and Henderson, 2009). The social benefits gained from CSA communities can incentivise individuals to become members (Lang, 2010). Bringing producers and consumers together through CSA may also create wider community connections (Haney et al., 2015). The term 'sweat equity' describes the sense of 'togetherness' that working with others on physical projects can produce (Lang, 2010). This can

create community attachments to food production, which may ensure the durability of CSA (Hunt, 2003).

The advancing ubiquity of technology and social media facilitates online communities, meaning that spatial proximity is no longer a requirement for forming communities (Pole and Gray, 2013). Why then are the social aspects of CSA attractive to potential members? Pole and Gray (2013) recognise a broader notion of community, which requires physical connections to solidify relationships. This includes the face-to-face contact often lost in online communities (Ostrom, 2007). It is also important to examine how CSA farm's online spaces may help to form a sense of community and strengthen community ties.

2.4.3 CSA: An Economic Choice?

Certain financial challenges have been identified as hindering the development of CSA farms. These include a lack of capital and low financial returns for farmers (Ostrom, 2007), alongside a discrepancy in member and farmer income (Hinrichs, 2000). The economic sustainability and viability of CSA depend on its ability to retain members (Hunt, 2003), placing considerable pressure on the organisers (Hinrichs, 2000). In order to retain members, organisers often use community activities to promote involvement (Hinrichs, 2000; Ostrom, 2007).

However, other studies have found that CSA can improve the financial stability of producers when setting up CSA farms as, by taking advance payments, there is no need to withdraw loans under uncertain conditions where agricultural production may fail (Vassalos et al., 2017). The benefits from trust and social interactions afforded to producers can offset potential financial risks (Sage, 2003). CSA farms can benefit from reduced dependence on external market forces, giving them the freedom to make their own financial decisions (Schönhart et al., 2009). Furthermore, Hunt (2003) highlights that CSA farms can be more profitable than small scale farms, not being reliant on agricultural subsidies or supermarket pricing strategies. However, this can leave them dependent upon direct marketing arrangements with consumers (Hunt, 2003).

Haney et al. (2015) find that farmers' sense of personal satisfaction may be greater when operating CSA farms. This is due to the interpersonal ties which can form through exchanges between producers and consumers, which can provide socially embedded value beyond the economic (Carolan, 2011). Offer (1997) explains the significance of social interactions in market exchanges coining the phrase the 'economy of regard', whereby their value extends past financial considerations (Offer, 1997). This is discussed by Sage (2003, p.48):

"the buyer gains insight into the production system, status and identity associated with the consumption of a good with limited distribution, and enhanced expertise, for example suggested

recipes, ways of preparing or serving food. The seller (producer), on the other hand, not only realises the value of the food but acquires an extension of regard".

This is beneficial to consumers as well, with Kolodinsky and Pelch (1997) finding that motivations for joining CSA farms are not just financial, but include improving connections with their communities (Brehm and Eisenhauer, 2008) and a desire for organic, environmentally friendly produce.

CSA has the potential to improve the socio-economic foundations of its local area by employing those who live locally (Born and Purcell, 2006), raising their incomes and reducing their dependence on hegemonic food systems, thus improving food security (Schönhart et al., 2009). Additionally, Lang (2010) identifies CSA as a key site for social change, providing healthy, fresh produce to those with limited means, and facilitating healthier eating habits at lower costs (Brown and Miller, 2008, cited in Vassalos et al., 2017). However, if the existing local economy is wealthy, this can draw income away from areas which may be more in need of economic growth (Born and Purcell, 2006). Therefore, whether CSA is more economically sustainable must be subject to further investigation.

2.4.4 Transparency, Trust and Quality

As trust in increasingly dis-embedded food systems decreases, consumers search for different routes to obtain produce (Penker, 2006). Pirog et al. (2001) find that consumers perceive locally grown food to be healthier, fresher and safer than supermarket produce, owing to the greater transparency with which it is produced. In this way, trust can serve in place of certification or standardisation. Furthermore, eliminating processors and packagers reduces supply chain lengths and improves transparency, and thereby trust in production.

Dong et al. (2019) examine the motivations behind small scale producers' decisions to market through CSA. Instead of distanced exchanges of foodstuffs, CSA farms employ interpersonal negotiations, which create strong and transparent networks (Fonte, 2008). A closer relationship with the site of production, such as in CSA farms, can cause consumers to attribute more value to produce. In turn, producers may raise their prices to reflect their farms' use of education and transparency (Albrecht and Smithers, 2018). The arrangement enables producers to maintain a competitive advantage by "*hedging risk under uncertainty*"" (Dong et al., 2019, p.3). Thus, by providing transparency, CSA can offer producers security given the uncertainty of food production, such as that in small-scale conventional farming (ibid.).

Consumer perceptions influence how CSA farms market produce (Watts et al., 2005; Dupuis and Goodman, 2005; Sage, 2003). Relations of trust are central to how consumers identify produce quality (Marsden et al., 2000), with transparency allowing individuals to connect food with the spaces of its production (Murdoch and Miele, 1999). Brehm and Eisenhauer (2008) find a desire for quality to be one of the strongest motivations for joining CSA farms. Therefore, for CSA farms, greater produce

quality can cement a loyal member base (Goodman, 2004). In the early 2000s, there was a move to research quality and how consumers directed food marketing (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005). Perceptions of quality were found to be constructed and negotiated in relation to mainstream food systems (Harvey et al., 2004). Ideas of quality were conflated with concepts such as taste and locality (Selfa and Qazi, 2005). On the contrary, Hvitsand (2016) reports variable experiences of produce quality at CSA farms, regardless of which, members continue to participate due to other benefits. Trust, transparency and produce quality play a significant role in the relationship between consumers and CSA farms.

2.5 Accessibility to CSA

A 2003 report on the viability of CSA in the UK emphasises the importance of expanding farms' member bases to ensure their longevity (Hunt, 2003). To enable CSA farms to become accessible to a wider demographic, attempts have been made to assess the barriers to this (Anderson and Fornell, 1994, cited in Haney et al., 2015), and characterise CSA participants (Bond et al., 2009). Thompson and Kidwell (1998) find a significant relationship between purchase location convenience and a willingness to participate. Some members cannot travel to collection locations (Zepeda and Leviten-Reid, 2004), lack time to collect produce (Ostrom, 2007), or are prevented by circumstantial constraints such as moving home. Regardless, Haney et al. (2015) find that many members are willing to accommodate lifestyle changes into their day-to-day lives. CSA has also been recorded as exclusionary to certain demographics. Slocum (2007) investigates the 'whiteness' of community food initiatives, noting a "*physical clustering of white bodies in the often-expensive spaces of community food*". She posits that this culture of food has been made white by the "*tendencies, strategies, the emphases and absences and the things overlooked*" (ibid., p.7).

2.6 The Dualistic Framings of Food Systems

Carolan's (2011) 'Embodied Food Politics' concludes by emphasising the importance of moving beyond the dualisms which have previously characterised agri-food literature. Renting et al. (2003) explore how food production networks, such as CSA, may generate new supply chains which cut across the boundaries of nature and society, and producers and consumers. Disrupting and transgressing the dualisms present in food systems research (Maxey, 2007) can support dynamic and multidimensional approaches (Maye et al., 2007). This thesis explores the unique position that CSA occupies, enabling agri-food research to move beyond these boundaries.

2.6.1 The Problem with the 'Local' and the 'Global'

The relationship between global and local food has been extensively explored. As such, this thesis will not explore the global/local dualism in depth, however, it is necessary to situate this thesis alongside these concepts. Zepeda and Li (2006, p.6) state that CSA is an "*unambiguously 'local'*" form of direct purchase, much research getting caught up in the conflation of local food with sustainable food (Born and Purcell, 2006). Tregear et al. (1998) identify a need to better understand how consumers perceive the relationship between food and place. According to Martinez et al. (2010), the term 'local' has lost a sense of geographic distance through marketing techniques which assure consumers of produce origin (Peterson et al., 2015). However, conflating 'local' with authenticity and seasonality simplifies the term's multifaceted nature (Goodman, 2002; Goodman and DuPuis, 2002), and causes confusion for consumers attempting to seek out sustainable food.

Although researchers have laboured over defining the 'local', the term still requires further clarification (Zepeda and Li, 2006). Born and Purcell (2006) explain that scale is socially constructed, and thus, fluid and relational, which makes defining the 'local' challenging (Born and Purcell, 2006). The terms global and local are often criticised for their scalar ambiguity, masking the multifaceted concept of place (Schnell, 2013). Apprehensions regarding global food networks have resulted in local food being theorised as more desirable to consumers. Where global is positioned as "*hegemonic and oppressive*", local is perceived as "*radial and subversive*" (Born and Purcell, 2006, p.200), as a counterpoint to social disempowerment and environmental degradation (Hinrichs, 2003). However, these binary conceptions mask the complex nature of sustainability (Hinrichs 2003), failing to account for the benefits of a globalised food system or the agency of local culture (Hines, 2000). Furthermore, this feeds the potentially exclusionary narratives surrounding CSA, which position it as a 'radial alternative'. Therefore, this thesis will not consider CSA as a 'local' form of purchase as defined in opposition to 'global' food networks.

2.6.2 The 'Conventional' and its 'Alternatives'

The growing dominance of unsustainable mainstream food systems has highlighted the need for food provisioning which addresses these issues (Renting et al., 2003). Individuals can express their resistance to mainstream food systems through conscious consumption choices (Mair et al., 2008). According to Guthman (2004, p.185), CSA farms can operate independently from hegemonic market structures. Many CSA members participate to resist the growth of large supermarket chains and industrialised agriculture (Ravenscroft et al., 2012). Joining CSA farms can represent a commitment to a range of positive change, from production techniques to social inequalities (Cone and Kakaliouris, 1995).

CSA is often labelled an 'alternative' mode of food production. The term 'alternative' in agri-food research indicates an opposition to 'conventional' supply chains, which can manifest a problematic relationality (Holloway et al., 2007). In normalising problematic practices of 'conventional' food systems (Maye et al., 2007), the binary opposition of the term remains unchallenged. Cameron and Wright (2014) explain that the term 'alternative' reinforces capitalist relationships in which 'alternative' is perceived as subordinate to 'conventional'. Simultaneously, Holloway et al. (2007) point to the dangers of romanticising idealised 'alternative' food systems. Maxey (2007) suggests using the term 'sustainable food' instead, however, this risks conflating the terms 'alternative' and 'sustainability'. This highlights the further need to interrogate the relationship between 'alternatives' and sustainability (Forssell and Lankoski, 2015).

Care must be taken when labelling 'alternatives' in food systems research; the term has different connotations in North American and European literature. In European studies, the term refers to small businesses which survive in the shadow of mainstream industrial food systems, aiming to promote food quality and rural development (Cox et al., 2008). However, the term is viewed more radically in North American studies, as a critique of neoliberal economic systems. Here, CSA is perceived as being able to engender change on a broader scale (ibid.).

'Conventional' food systems can (but do not always) disempower communities, creating vertically integrated food chains whereby power is concentrated in few large-scale corporations (Lacy, 2000). This can cause problems for 'alternatives' which become enmeshed in hegemonic food systems (Schnell, 2007). For example, although organic agriculture has previously been viewed as an 'alternative', it has been adopted by mainstream food systems, through which 'alternative' and 'conventional' become intertwined. This can facilitate the widespread adoption of sustainable food choices by making them more accessible to a broader base of supermarket consumers. However, the binaries through which organic practices have emerged, have also hindered its expansion where 'alternative' is perceived as radical, and so exclusionary (Maxey, 2007). Evidently, these binary frameworks can restrict such movements in their growth.

Watts et al. (2005) suggest using a framework for weaker or stronger alternatives. However, this leaves the spheres of 'alternative' and 'conventional' intact (Maxey, 2007). Ilbery and Maye (2005) emphasise that the polar division of these terms rarely exists, questioning the extent to which a truly 'alternative' approach to food production can endure. As such, it is necessary to explore how CSA may help to move beyond these problematic dualisms in food systems research. This thesis will explore the relationship between CSA and mainstream hegemonic food systems.

2.6.3 Nature and Culture in Agricultural Spaces

Agri-food studies have historically considered nature and culture as fundamentally separate. This is characteristic of the Cartesian divisions of nature and culture, overlooking the corporeal experiences that enrich relationships between humans, nonhumans, and nature (Goodman, 1999). Agri-food spaces have previously been considered as part of the social world, and yet essentially natural (Goodman, 1999). It is considered that these spaces are viewed anthropocentrically, manipulated by humans, and treated as a resource for exploitation. However, who shapes the natural environment is contested (Goodman, 1999). The role of nonhumans in shaping landscapes is subsumed under dominant anthropocentric perspectives (Goodman, 1999). Hinchliffe (2007), however, argues that we must recognise that heterogeneous networks of actants co-produce these spaces.

Attempts to overcome dualistic considerations of nature and culture have been characterised by such notions as Whatmore's (1997) hybridity whereby the two inhabit amalgamated forms. However, the concept of hybridity has come under scrutiny by implying pure expressions of these binaries which often do not exist in practice (Maxey, 2007). Instead, acknowledging how both the environment and communities shape agricultural spaces can help to move beyond the nature/culture dualism (Maxey, 2007). In these spaces of contestation and friction, groups such as CSA may emerge. Exploring how these groups may help to move beyond this divide is essential and will be explored within this thesis.

2.6.4 Producers, Consumers, and Narratives of Disconnection

Previous agri-food studies have been dominated by a Marxist focus on production, with consumers being viewed as passive and non-political (Goodman and Dupuis, 2002). Consumer interactions were under-theorised and one-dimensional (ibid). Examinations of the cultural theory surrounding the development of consumption in the early 2000s explored its power to change society (Goodman and Dupuis, 2002; Lockie, 2002; Goodman, 2004). This was examined through the potential for AFNs to rework producer and consumer relationships. However, this only drew the asymmetrical divisions away from producers onto consumers (Goodman and Dupuis, 2002). Therefore, Holloway et al. (2007) suggest looking beyond conventional production and consumption frameworks which further perpetuate dualisms such as 'alternative' and 'conventional'.

An increasing number of studies suggest that reconnecting producers and consumers can address sustainability concerns (Albrecht and Smithers, 2018). Kneafsey et al. (2008) examine how AFNs can reconnect consumers, producers and food in the UK through differing production and sale techniques. Shortening food supply chains and forming ethical relationships reduces the distance between producers and consumers, which can alter consumer attitudes and behaviours (Lamine et

al., 2012). By promoting face-to-face interactions and connections to place, CSA can cut across the boundaries separating producers and consumers, realigning their interests (Renting et al., 2003). This can facilitate greater compassion and care for others and the environment (Hayden and Buck, 2012).

However, Tregear (2011) argues that we must not accept common narratives such as 'reconnection' without first scrutinising them. Dowler et al. (2009, p.205), define reconnection as the "*bringing together of different elements of the food system*". This includes social, biological and moral elements, encompassing global, and local embodied experiences (Bos and Owen, 2016). Kneafsey (2010) posits that reconnection is multi-scalar, strengthening and consolidating place-based food systems and affecting change at multiple levels (Ilbery et al., 2005). The notion of reconnection extends to nonhumans and landscapes, which is problematic when situated in more-than-human geographies owing to the frequency of encounters with nonhumans in everyday life regardless of CSA involvement (Ginn, 2014). These reconnection narratives homogenise the varied encounters between different food system actors (Pitt, 2017). Dowler et al. (2009) suggest that the term 'reconnection' implies a disconnection from the typical landscapes of food systems, generating problematic impressions of nostalgia for a romanticised pastoral ideal. This thesis will question the narratives of reconnection within the context of CSA.

CSA can reduce the producer/consumer dualism by facilitating more symmetrical relationships (Goodman and DuPuis, 2002; Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002, cited in Carolan, 2007). Lockie and Kitto (2000) consider producer and consumer cultures as mutually constitutive; research must, therefore, reflect this. In learning to grow and distribute their own food, CSA members can become both producers and consumers (Goodman, 2002). Bridging divides between knowing and growing food requires rethinking production and consumption frameworks in agri-food literature (Goodman and DuPuis, 2002). Holloway et al. (2007) suggest that using relational concepts can overcome this dualism, as the extent to which food system participants with fundamentally differing mindsets can be brought together is questioned (Ilbery et al., 2005). It is important to explore expressions of power and agency within these relationships to reveal the barriers to overcoming this dualism (Holloway et al., 2007).

Moving beyond these multiple dualisms is central to forming more sustainable, integrated food systems. This thesis will explore how CSA can provide spaces for growing, purchasing and eating food, and how this may influence CSA member's attitudes and beliefs, particularly regarding sustainability.

2.7 Communities and Caring Practice

Lacy's (2000) definition of an empowered community highlights how they can promote sustainable change in the face of climate change. He defines it as *"a group of people in a locality capable of initiating a process of social or community action to change their economic, social, cultural, and/or environmental situation"* (Lacy, 2000, p.3). According to Ilbery and Maye (2005), progression in sustainability requires both social and political involvement. In recent years, reflecting a turn to localism, community development and empowerment has been used to tackle issues such as poverty and deprivation (Dinnie and Fischer, 2020). CSA places value on social, environmental, economic and ethical factors (Feagan and Henderson, 2009, cited in Haney et al., 2015), and so should be explored using a multidisciplinary approach. Hence, the nature of caring practice and community in CSA farms must also be viewed as multifaceted and investigated so.

It is essential to focus the term 'community' within the context of this research (Haney et al., 2015). This thesis views the term in line with Massey's (1994) 'sense of community', defined by how it is felt and experienced. This is outlined by Neal and Walters (2008, cited in Dinnie and Fischer, 2020, p.246) as "*how closely people feel they are connected to others in their locality, and influences engagement with material and concrete structures and everyday activities that then give rise to tangible evidence of community*". Thus, community results from how people interact (Dinnie and Fischer, 2020). A sense of community thereby emerges through feelings of belonging, contingent upon social and economic factors, in conjunction with place-based networks (Haney et al., 2015). Wilkinson (1991) highlights the interconnections between community and place-based relationships. Hence, CSA communities are contingent upon their situational and contextual factors. Examining them can reveal how CSA farms can realign people with food production through greater relations with place (Tronto, 1993).

Placed-based relationships can encourage caring practices which creates strong, embedded communities (Ravenscroft et al., 2012). Active participation in CSA farms brings individuals together through caring connections between humans, nonhumans and landscapes (Maxey, 2007; Schnell, 2007). Caring can be seen as a positive force, facilitating sustainable actions at multiple levels (Cox, 2010).

Although the caring relationships formed within CSA farms are multiple and varied, this thesis identifies three predominant forms in agri-food literature. These types of care are not exhaustive and do not attempt to fully define the nature of caring in CSA farms. Nevertheless, they provide a route for identifying the interacting ways through which care is practised. The first type of care identified is a relational 'ethic of care' pioneered by Carol Gillian (1982) and since expanded upon by feminist geographers such as Joan Tronto, and Jessica and Allison Hayes-Conroy. Secondarily, the literature

review identifies a sense of caring stewardship and responsibility towards the environment. Therapeutic care is also acknowledged, often performed through more formalized caring practices within CSA farms organized for healthcare purposes. Finally, it is recognised that these caring practices relate to, and interact with one another in the spaces of CSA to form complex and diverse communities.

2.7.1 A Relational Ethic of Care

A feminist ethic of care originated in the work of Carol Gillian (1982), "*based on relatedness and responsiveness to the needs of others*" (Cox, 2010, p.3). Tronto (1993) furthers this ethic of care, which can be defined as "*a consideration of, and preparedness to take action over, the needs of others (not only human others)"* (Dowler et al., 2009, p.212). A feminist ethic of care is central to CSA, women having held key roles in the farms since its advent (Jarosz, 2011). It views caring as a way of relating to others (Staeheli and Brown, 2003, cited in McEwan and Goodman, 2010), emerging from relational values, or a "*normative human sense of connection or kinship with other living things, reflective and expressive of care, identity, belonging and responsibility*" (West et al., 2018, p.1). According to Tronto (2006) there are different phases of care: caring about, caring for, giving care, and receiving care. Face-to-face interactions facilitated by CSA farms can afford greater social connectedness (Hinrichs, 2003), helping members to relate to one another, forming trusting relationships. Thus, CSA promotes connections to others based on mutual relations of trust (Mcdowell, 2004, cited in Popke, 2006).

This ethic of care has also challenged the assumed spaces of caring, often confined to the private realm (Tronto, 1993). However, recent studies of the spaces of care (Goodman et al., 2010) have delivered a broader conception of where it is performed. Care is produced, developed and received geographically; therefore, it must be explored in conjunction with material and embodied experiences (Dwiartama and Rosin, 2014). Food networks themselves are inherently contextual, contingent upon interactions between humans, nonhumans and landscapes (Born and Purcell, 2006). At the same time that landscapes can shape the identities of individuals within them (Penker, 2006), relationships created within CSA farms can endow the place with meaning, embedding them with memory (Schnell, 2013). This renders caring relations highly situational to their respective CSA farms (Popke, 2006). According to Jarosz (2011) caring is embodied, making tactile engagement vital to its constitution. Within CSA farms, members can form deep caring connections to one another and the space, through active engagement (Carolan, 2007). Through this, CSA farms can cultivate commitments to stronger caring relationships (McCormack, 2003). Nurturing these relationships can increase the chance that members remain committed (Hunt et al., 2012).

In addition to ensuring CSA farms' durability through maintaining commitments, a relational ethic of care is motivated by, and drives moral reasoning, influencing human practice (Wells and Gradwell, 2001). De la Bellacasa (2010) emphasises the compatibility of an ethic of sustainability and an ethic of care. CSA can deepen sustainable values by encouraging an ethic of care which may subsequently translate into member's everyday lives (Jessica Hayes-Conroy and Allison Hayes-Conroy, 2010).

2.7.2 Practices of Caring Stewardship

Graddy-Lovelace (2020) highlights that as human-environmental connections are lost, so too is a sense of caring. Environmental care is essential for promoting sustainable attitudes and can be expressed as a decision to choose sustainably farmed produce, thereby caring at a distance (de la Bellacasa, 2010). Sharing the same relational values as an ethic of care, a sense of caring stewardship and responsibility over the environment can emerge in the interface between agency, knowledge and care (Enqvist et al., 2018). An interweaving of space, nature and sociality (Hinrichs, 2003) through CSA can bridge the ethical division of nature and culture as separate entities, giving rise to concerns for resource management (Wells and Gradwell, 2001). In line with West et al. (2018), this thesis regards caring and stewardship as fundamentally intertwined.

So how is a sense of caring stewardship produced? CSA farms facilitate encounters with landscapes and environments which, as Conradson (2005) finds, can enhance a sense of care towards it. Thoughtful and meaningful engagements with the environment in certain contexts can foster care and generate a recognition of the importance of caring (Valentine, 2008). West et al. (2018, p.7) regard stewardship as *"firstly, emergent from social-ecological relations, secondly, embodied and practiced, and thirdly, situated and political".* In this way, care binds sustainability in a local and embedded context (Ravenscroft et al., 2012), forming more respectful attitudes and behaviours towards it (Goralnik and Nelson, 2011). However, this lacks an explanation of the enabling mechanisms required to bring about caring attitudes at broader scales.

Crouch (2003) posits that concepts such as 'nature' emerge from a processual intersubjective understanding, through relating to others. According to Whatmore (1997), embodied experiences can shape ethical considerations. She introduces corporeal hybridity whereby a physical awareness of the surrounding space may encourage a rethinking of ethical standpoints (Whatmore, 1997). Pitt (2017) suggests that anything that you nurture can become part of your community because you care for it. Interacting with nonhumans and landscapes in CSA farms can help members to recognise its value so that they care for, and feel responsible for it. Bennett (2010) considers that experiencing 'nonhuman vitality' can decentre a person's sense of human exceptionalism. In this way, CSA can nurture

environmental concerns, promoting different attitudes towards wildlife, which may bring about lifestyle changes (O'Hara and Stagl, 2001; Russell and Zepeda, 2007). Moreover, McEwan and Goodman (2010) express the importance of seeing caring as collective. Embodied experiences with CSA farms can breach individualistic ethics (Whatmore, 1997), rendering relational understandings, facilitated by CSA farms, vital for recognising who makes up the community.

Care and responsibility are interconnected, complex (Popke, 2009), and laden with negotiations of power (McEwan and Goodman, 2008). It is essential to examine power and agency in relationships of caring stewardship. Those cared for are often identified by whether they are deemed anthropocentrically useful, as contributing to the community (Pitt, 2017). Popke (2009) does not regard those who do not contribute to be of ethical concern. Ethical frameworks within agri-food literature tend to position human needs first. Beacham (2018, p.10), however, suggests that a "*horizontal web of interdependency between all matters*" should be included in this. Existing in a uniquely liminal position, food traverses the boundaries of nature and culture (Atkinson, 1983). This renders it central to moving beyond hierarchical divisions of humans and nonhumans, and the dualisms of nature and culture in agri-food literature.

2.7.3 Therapeutic Caring

Therapeutic care farms have been used to 'treat' mental health issues since the 1950s and 60s (Sempik and Aldridge, 2006). Popular in Holland and Belgium (Ravenscroft et al., 2012), care farms have recently become adopted in the UK. Charles (2011) explores 'caring practice' for people with physical and mental health problems within CSA farms. Hine et al. (2008) detail the investigations into 'green exercise' (Peacock et al., 2007), 'ecotherapy' (MIND, 2007), and 'therapeutic horticulture' (Sempik and Aldridge, 2006), becoming collectively termed 'green care'. These studies highlight the health benefits of farming with the natural landscape. Hassink et al. (2007, p.22) define care farming as "*The utilization of agricultural farms as a basis for promoting human mental and physical health and social well-being*". This thesis will use this definition to examine therapeutic caring in CSA farms, which can help to form communities.

Landscapes can generate a range of responses both physical and non-representational, making them a crucial site for investigating the relationship between nature and the self (Conradson, 2005). Conn (1998) finds that experiences with natural environments can contribute to greater self-recognition alongside a growing care for the environment. Zepeda et al. (2013) question whether CSA can improve the psychological wellbeing of its participants but find that membership contributes to an individual's sense of autonomy through positive experiences. For Burls (2007), the beneficial outcomes of exposure to the natural environment on wellbeing are more prominent in disabled and

marginalised populations, overcoming challenges such as social exclusion. There are significant potential health benefits for members, beyond the merely physical.

2.7.4 Intersecting Relationships of Care

Understanding how the different caring practices interrelate and overlap is essential for recognising how they may constitute cohesive, durable CSA communities. Facilitating lasting CSA communities can ensure awareness of the need for food system sustainability. An ethic of care binds both a relational sense of care towards others, and a sense of caring stewardship towards nonhumans and landscapes, through the similar ethical discourses by which they are practised (Whatmore, 1997).

Within CSA farms, a conception of the self can emerge through negotiations with humans, nonhumans and landscapes (Conradson, 2005). This recognition of a more distributed notion of the self (Carolan, 2011), can promote relational caring connections, and highlight the need to look after oneself. Additionally, caring stewardship towards the environment can prompt members to reflect on self-care, which may benefit their psychological wellbeing. An ethic of care can be practiced alongside formal therapeutic caring practices, generating layered, multifaceted relationships. Furthermore, bringing like-minded people into caring relationships may nurture a greater sense of environmental responsibility (Pitt, 2017). Thus, individuals may consider their contributions to sustainability through all capacities and scales (Maxey, 2007). It is necessary to explore how layered caring practices can create communities of members concerned for sustainability on multiple levels. This thesis will explore how these caring practices are expressed within CSA farms, and how they interact to form caring communities.

2.8 How can CSA Engender Environmentally Conscious Attitudes?

2.8.1 Actor Network Theory

The previously discussed nature/culture dualism has encumbered the progress of geographic and sociological research. Actor network theory (ANT) rejects the nature/culture dualism, suggesting that all entities in the world constitute heterogeneous, symmetrical networks (Latour, 1993). According to Latour (1993), agency is collective and relational, all humans and nonhumans having the capacity to act in and affect the world. ANT appreciates the role of nature in co-creating food systems (Murdoch et al., 2000). It employs a relational approach, accounting for the diversity of actors and experiences. This renders it an effective tool for examining constructions and relations of nature and culture in CSA spaces, and how sustainable values can arise within them.

Geographical and sociological thought previously considered the mind and body separately, termed the Cartesian dualism (Carolan, 2011). Western thought is dominated by this assumption,

meaning that learning about the world is visual and representational, rather than sensorial (ibid.). This dualistic reading of the mind and body has been widely criticised in geographical thought (Grosz, 1994; Plumwood, 2000). Through it, learning fundamentally privileges the *human* body using anthropocentric reasoning. ANT rethinks the relationship between the self and the other, through a post-human framework. This broadens who and what is included in political and ethical spheres beyond the human body (Whatmore, 1997). All actors are privileged equally, being considered on the same moral ground. This makes ANT useful for understanding and deconstructing relationships of power between CSA participants, both human and nonhuman (Murdoch et al., 2000).

ANT considers human, nonhumans and landscapes through relational connections (Latour, 1993). As the individual is seen as a 'site of heterogeneous identities', the capacity for agency includes a diverse ethical community (Whatmore, 1997). ANT suggests that configurations of the self within communities are defined through social relationships, and negotiations between different actors (Friedmann, 1989, cited in Whatmore, 1997). Social agency, therefore, is not just afforded to bodies, but is produced through networks of heterogeneous relations (Law, 1992, cited in Goodman, 1999). The interconnections between communities and place, and the exercise of imagination in place brings about a collective identity, binding the two (Kemmis, 1990). Thus, intrinsic microscale networks contribute to forming communities. In recognising the diversity of these networks, CSA members may better acknowledge the importance of nonhumans and the environment in contributing to the ethical community (Jarosz, 2000). This renders ANT an effective tool for examining how CSA may cut across the dualistic ontologies present in considerations of food systems.

However, there are several challenges to using ANT to examine CSA. Goodman and DuPuis (2002) state that ANT is unable to be as integrative as is needed to bridge the consumer-producer divide. Instead, uses of ANT have further perpetuated this divide by providing asymmetric considerations of production and consumption, examining these relationships using linear frameworks (Lockie and Kitto, 2000). As such, they suggest rethinking approaches to examining food system politics. Additionally, Kirwan (2006) expresses his concern that ANT is too descriptive, failing to enable theoretical explanations, or to analyse quality within agri-food studies. Therefore, caution must be taken when utilising this approach.

2.8.2 Tactile Space and 'Doing' in Informing Environmentally-Conscious Attitudes.

Examining the processes and practices which occur during volunteering can reveal how CSA farms can influence members' attitudes, beliefs and relationships. In an increasingly fast-paced world, the value of the present moment can be lost in the speed of interactions within and between people, objects and landscapes (Thrift, 2000). As previously discussed, Bateson (1972) suggests that modern societies

have cut off relational feedbacks between the natural world and human behaviour. Thus, divisions between understandings of the natural and social worlds have abstracted the two, causing them to become objectified and depoliticised (Goodman, 1999). It is essential to explore how volunteering may bridge this epistemic distance.

Current agri-food understandings are bound by representational knowledge, and distanced from lived experiences (Carolan, 2011). Thrift (2000) questions what constitutes thought and knowledge, emphasising the importance of non-cognitive and sensory comprehensions of how our bodies move in and know the world. Through non-cognitive bodily practices, experiences of the present can be intensified (Thrift, 2000). Polanyi (1983, cited in Carolan, 2011) emphasises that we know more than we can tell: the tacit dimensions of knowledge allow us to glean more than can be representationally learnt. Therefore, we must re-learn to think with the body and re-engage with non-representational education (Merleau-Ponty, 1945).

So how can CSA farms create spaces for non-representational learning? Carolan's (2007, p.1265) concept of tactile space "*seeks to further embed and embody individuals within the social and natural worlds*" by nurturing humans' tacit knowledge. Tactile space can facilitate sensorial bodily interactions with the world in a "*non-dualistic, highly decentred manner*" (Carolan, 2007, p.1270). According to Carolan (2011, p.1), "*understandings of the world are inextricably linked to lived experiences"*. By offering lived, material experiences with agricultural production, CSA farms can retune members' food knowledge in relation to others (human and nonhuman) and landscapes (Carolan, 2011). Through this, members may cultivate behaviours and intelligibilities (Thrift, 2004), becoming more acquainted with their sensory awareness of the world, such as knowing when an apple is ready to be picked. Therefore, engaging members in cultivation through tactile space can help them to form new material knowledge and become, through their senses, aware of the relationship between food production and landscapes (Crouch, 2003).

Lived experiences with agricultural production through CSA can reduce epistemic distance (Carolan, 2007), enabling members to participate in food production physically (Harrison, 2000, cited in Carolan, 2008; Conradson, 2005). Through this, they may become sensorially embedded in the farm context (Carolan, 2007), which can bring phenomena related to agricultural production and consumption into focus (Carolan, 2007; 2008; 2011). One example of this is a "*lived sense of seasonality*" (Cone and Myrhe, 2000, p.188). In this way, CSA members may better grasp ecological processes and the environmental pressures that agriculture faces (Schnell, 2013). Furthermore, members may see how their consumption choices can affect others and the environment (Bateson, 1972), driving home the need for food system sustainability (Lacy, 2000).

Greater connections to a space can also reveal the environmental challenges which affect it, owing to the situated nature of knowing (Haraway, 1992, cited in Carolan, 2007). CSA promotes deep connections (Lamb, 1994, cited in Paul, 2019) and a sense of belonging and responsibility towards environments (Schnell, 2013). Different contextual interactions occurring within CSA farms co-constitute the social connections which humans have within, and in relation to it (Tuan, 1977). Thus, the embodied exchanges which happen within CSA farms play out as a *"subjective negotiation with the cultural contexts*", forming deeper comprehensions of the space (Crouch, 2003, p.24). Agricultural production and consumption are embedded in their social and ecological contexts (Penker, 2006). Casey (2001, cited in Schnell, 2013) argues that recognising food in connection to place can create narratives which 'thicken place experience'. Therefore, closer connections and physical engagements with place may bring about an appreciation for how human actions impact the environment (DeLind, 1998). This is essential for engendering durable change, which stems from an intrinsic understanding of people-in-place (DeLind, 2006).

Tactile space facilitates a recognition of the interconnectedness of humans and nonhumans, horizontalizing their relationships (Hayden and Buck, 2012), bridging the nature/culture dualism. Jane Bennett (2010, p.112) highlights that considering the nonhuman world as "*vital, energetic, lively*" is central to helping individuals to appreciate that they share the world with other beings. Through repeated material engagements and interactions with nonhumans and landscapes (such as in volunteering), CSA members may identify moments of shared physicality. Ideas of 'the natural' can be constructed through an embodied unconsciousness through which the body attends to material and non-representational configurations that the embodiment has produced (Thrift, 2000). Promoting active participation in CSA farms, therefore, can show communities how they influence the environment, thus encouraging sustainable behaviours (Lacy, 2000).

However, long term attitudinal change is needed in order to produce lasting commitments to environmentally sustainable lifestyles (Carolan, 2007). Hayden and Buck (2012) report changed environmental behaviours over the course of CSA membership, emerging out of altered ideologies, affective embodied experiences and increased environmental awareness. What results is an appreciation for, and connection to the environment and food production. However, Ostrom (2007) questions whether CSA members change as a result of participation. Further examination is necessary to reveal how CSA farms may engender attitudinal change. This thesis will use tactile space to explore the extent to which CSA farms nurture non-representational knowledge, in order to uncover how they may influence member's sustainability concerns (Carolan, 2007).

It is important to note previous criticisms of non-representational theories, such as tactile space, for not accounting for the experiences of a range of demographics in the spaces of food

production. Colls (2012) criticises a historic gender blindness and lack of acknowledgement of bodily difference; the differing bodily experiences in CSA spaces must be accounted for. Pitt (2017, p.23) suggests that non-representational knowledge may not be as significant, as "*moral instruction exchanged between people*". It is, therefore, necessary explore how both representational and non-representational experiences influence the perceived environmental effects of production and consumption (Carolan, 2011).

2.8.3 Visceral Geographies

Embodied, sensory interactions are characterised by visceral relationships between humans, nonhumans and landscapes. Examining these visceral interactions can reveal their impact on CSA member's perceptions of food and agriculture. Pioneered by Jessica and Alison Hayes-Conroy, visceral food geographies explore engagements between different actors within and between food networks. Longhurst et al. (2009, p.334) define visceral as *"the sensations, moods and ways of being that emerge from our sensory engagement with the material and discursive environments in which we live*". Visceral geographies put affective physical, non-cognitive inhabitations of the world first, to recognise the bodily and material engagements in everyday experiences (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Both cognitive and non-cognitive knowledge work together, producing a minded body with a greater conception of the world (McWhorter, 1999, cited in Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). The inter-corporeality of humans, nonhumans and landscapes formed through visceral interactions can help to move beyond the dualistic ontologies which view nature and culture as separate. This encourages scepticism of these ontological boundaries rather than refuting their existence.

Visceral reactions are particularly prominent in humans' relationships with food. Goodman (2016, p.3), regarding food, states "*it is multiple, it is liminal, it is shifting, it is fully situated in temporal social material and spatial relationalities*" and, therefore, must be researched so. How food affects individuals viscerally changes, depending on the stage of its lifecycle, from farming it, to eating it. CSA farms can provide spaces in which these visceral reactions occur simultaneously. This thesis will explore how CSA farms bring the processes of farming, purchasing and eating food together, exploring how this may impact a member's relationship with food.

Visceral food geographies can help to better understand power dynamics present in society. This ranges from revealing differences in identity, to highlighting a neglect of gendered perspectives in agri-food literature (Sandover, 2013). Thus, they can assist in uncovering how food system actors can resist hegemonic food networks (Thrift, 2004). Although visceral reactions are inherently social and political (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010), their role in shaping environmental concerns

has room to be explored further. This is essential for uncovering CSA may afford members sustainable values and new sensibilities towards food.

2.9 The Online Spaces of CSA

Social media now plays a fundamental role in the market relationships and consumption habits which characterise food systems, becoming central to disseminating food knowledge (Zhang et al., 2019). In the case of CSA, Facebook has been utilised by farms to provide information to, and educate their members on sustainability issues, to produce attitudinal change (De Bernardi et al., 2020). The use of Facebook by CSA farms has facilitated discussions between all farm participants, allowing everyone to 'have their say' in their organisation and direction (Barnes, 2017). This has encouraged a bridging of the previously discussed divide between producers and consumers, providing individuals with opportunities to make decisions over the production of their food. The employment of social media by CSA farms can bridge spatial divides. Holloway (2002) suggests that the internet has the potential to overcome spatial boundaries. Where less able members cannot not participate physically, social media may provide them with access to the farms. Therefore, social media, in particular Facebook, has become a valuable platform for CSA farms.

The 2020 national lockdown owing to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in members no longer being able to visit physically their CSA farms. This revealed the value of social media in allowing CSA farms to remain connected with their participants. As previously discussed, CSA members are often motivated to join by the prospect of socio-material connections gained through visiting, and volunteering on the farms. However, the inability to visit and form these connections jeopardised the farms' durability. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Facebook allowed many CSA farms to maintain relationships with their communities.

So how did Facebook allow the CSA farms to keep these relationships? Bos and Owen (2016) discuss that CSA farms can generate feelings of familiarity by providing images of the production processes which can facilitate transparency. Language and visual imagery using emotive and visceral registers can help members to form connections to the farms and its produce online (Bos and Owen, 2016). However, the extent to which embodied connections can translate online through visceral digital experiences to substitute the trust formed through physical engagement is questioned (Schneider et al., 2018). Bos and Owen (2016) emphasise that although these online relationships are important, they cannot substitute the affective socio-material connections, face-to-face interactions and embodied ways of knowing which emerge through volunteering at a CSA farm. They introduce the concept of 'virtual reconnection' which must be treated as supplementary to CSA relationships as *"there is a limit to the extent that people experience and pursue a material connection*" (Bos and Owen,

2016, p.12). Thus, whilst these online engagements may not necessarily translate to a deepened connection to a place (Carolan, 2011), they may be able to maintain existing connections. It is, therefore, important to explore the relationships between social media and CSA farms, particularly during COVID-19.

2.10 Formulating the Research Questions

This literature review has examined the disconnection from food that has emerged from the growth of industrialised and homogenised agri-food business, characterised by the growing epistemic distance in knowledge of food, and decreasing levels of trust and transparency in food systems. It has examined a brief history of CSA in the UK and explored how it could be a solution to the problems of increasingly distanced food systems, identifying the need to explore how CSA farms may produce environmentally conscious attitudes, empower communities, and be more economically sustainable.

It has investigated how agri-food literature has previously delivered arguments through problematic dualistic frameworks, identifying the need to move beyond these. In particular, the relationship between dualisms such as global and local, alternative and conventional, nature and culture in agricultural spaces, and producers and consumers have been explored. Further exploration into how CSA can overcome the latter three dualisms was identified as essential to the development of agri-food literature.

The literature review has explored the characteristics of CSA farm communities, identifying three predominant types of caring practice. These include a relational ethic of care, a sense of caring stewardship, and therapeutic caring. It identifies the necessity of exploring these caring practices as intersecting and interacting, and identifies the importance of examining how they are expressed within CSA farms to promote caring practices elsewhere.

Looking at how CSA farms can engender environmentally conscious attitudes has seen how the concepts of ANT, tactile space and visceral geographies may be effective tools with which to explore CSA. Finally examining the centrality of the online spaces, particularly Facebook, to the relationships formed within CSA farms.

Previous research into CSA has left certain areas unexplored, particularly the in-depth examination of interacting, multiple forms of sustainability and different types of care in conjunction with one another. Furthermore, they have neglected to further investigate the binaries which often characterise considerations of CSA farms. As such, the research questions are as follows:

Q1. How do CSA initiatives relate to participants' concerns surrounding sustainability?
Q2. In what ways do CSA farms rely on elements of the conventional food system?

Q3. What types of care can be seen in CSA farms and how are they expressed?

Q4. In what ways do CSA initiatives bring together farming, purchasing and eating food?

Chapter 3. CSA: Formulating a Research Strategy

3.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the processes and practices through which CSA can form and develop relationships of care and contribute to greater food system sustainability. Qualitative research methods can examine the societal constructions, representations and performances which occur in the world (Shurmer-Smith, 2002). As such, they lent themselves to investigating how CSA landscapes can co-construct the cultures and identities of their members, including the social processes and relations of power present (Longhurst, 2010). They also allow researchers to understand the complex attitudes and beliefs of participants (Limb and Dwyer, 2001), vital for uncovering negotiations of power and agency between CSA members and food systems. Food systems are dynamic and ever-changing; the adaptability of qualitative methods made them useful for exploring subjectivity in the social worlds of CSA farms (ibid.).

Recent theoretical explorations of food systems have demanded moving beyond typically dualistic ontological standpoints, which privilege examining human consciousness over bodily productions in space (Goodman, 2001). Recent feminist food geographies (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010) have encouraged examining the varied visceral reactions to food, and the spaces of food production. According to Pink (2013, p.7), it is necessary to "*attend to the senses*" when representing others. Methodological tools which afford ontological symmetry between humans and nonhumans can facilitate this. Hence, this thesis employed an ethnographic approach, using participant observation during volunteer days at the CSA farms.

Food exists on the boundary of multiple ontological standpoints (Mol, 2008); it is essential not to lose focus on socio-political factors at the expense of examining material compositions. Food sustainability is fundamentally socio-political and requires an approach which accounts for bodily connections to food. A mixed-method approach was required to capture the complex and contrasting processes and tensions occurring in CSA farms (Longhurst, 2010). Therefore, interviews were used to explore how and the extent to which CSA involvement formed knowledge of sustainability.

Flexibility in research is crucial, owing to the unexpected nature of everyday life. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the ability of this research project to safely conduct the full series of participant observation visits, and face-to-face interviews organised from March to May 2020. The initial methodology designed and partially conducted was accompanied by an adjusted research design, produced in order to safely conduct further research. The inability to complete the ethnographic research presented a challenge to capturing visceral reactions to CSA food production. In response, the initial methodology was altered, allowing existing participants to complete online interviews, or answer directives. Directives are a socio-historical research method, with similarities to

questionnaires, which access experiential data by asking participants to recount sensory descriptions of topics or events. Thus, sensory experiences were captured by CSA members themselves. Engaging with participants' experiential narratives of food systems can uncover real-world sensory and visceral encounters (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010), revealing their relationships and the dynamics with others, and the farms.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the importance of social media, particularly Facebook, to the CSA farms, in delivering updates to their members. Facebook posts regarding the farms' precautionary measures during COVID-19 uncovered their online interactions with members, offering a crucial insight into their communities. A discourse analysis of CSA farms' Facebook pages explored the dynamics and relationships of care in these online spaces.

This mixed-method analysis gleaned a series of narratives from the CSA participants. In order to connect the narratives and data, three prominent themes were drawn out through data analysis. The narratives were woven together through these themes, utilising a 'tapestry' approach. In doing so, the processes occurring in CSA farms, co-constructed by both the themes, and the narrative data could be explored.

3.2 Choice of Location

Initially, four sites in the South of England were chosen, in the South East and South West regions. Two were around the region of Bristol. A city pioneering the drive for sustainable urban food systems, it was a crucial site for examination. Entities such as the Bristol Food Network, the Bristol Food Policy Council and the Bristol Green Capital Partnership lead the city's pioneering sustainable food movement.

In the South East of England, CSA farms use a variety of models to provide food to surrounding communities. In order to explore these various models, both urban and rural, one farm in Sussex, and one in Surrey were examined. A table comparing the different models is provided below.

Table removed.

Table 1: Table Comparing Four Initial CSA Sites.

Although these farms were initially spatially confined due to the participant observation, the change of method reduced these constraints. The scope was expanded and 33 CSA schemes in the South of England were contacted. Two sites granted access and sent the directives to their members. A table comparing these sites can be seen below:

Table removed.

Table 2: Table Comparing Two Supplementary CSA Sites.

3.3 Participant Selection

Participants were recruited through the farms' point of contact (those provided on the CSA Soil Association website), who acted as a gatekeeper for CSA members. The gatekeeper helped to organise initial interviews and access for volunteer days, and provided additional relevant documents regarding the farms (including self-conducted survey results) for analysis. They also sent out advertisements for the directives through mailing lists, newsletters or social media. The decision to respond was then contingent upon the members, which ensured that they did not feel obliged to participate. Where

participants requested online interviews, these were conducted through Zoom communications software (Zoom) in accordance with social distancing policy. The risk of self-selection bias, whereby participants responded due to a prior interest in the topic, however, could not be mitigated entirely.

3.4 Participant Observation

Participant observation can reveal the personal visceral and sensory experiences of individuals. This was necessary to highlight how CSA farms may influence their members. The encounters which occur through participant observation "*arise out of the phenomenon and settings you are investigating"* (Laurier, 2010, p.117). This can give researchers an in-depth understanding of the relational and embodied practices occurring in these spaces through engaging with place (Castro, 2018). Placing a researcher in a fieldwork site incorporates them into the research (Kearns, 2016), avoiding an imbalance of power and enabling situational pragmatism (Shurmer-Smith, 2002). This can help to unveil often unaccounted for processes, non-verbal interactions and relationships between community members (Cook, 1997). Participant observation provides complementary contextual evidence to other forms of data collection (Kearns, 2016). As such, it helped to provide a crucial insight into the practices and processes through which CSA members developed deeper conceptions of food system sustainability.

3.4.1 Conducting Participant Observation

The participant observation was conducted prior to the interviews, ensuring that no assumptions of the farm community were made. A researcher's actions in the fieldwork site can determine the data produced (Kearns, 2016). Therefore, the site was visited before the fieldwork to scope out any farm norms (such as clothing) to ensure that the role of an 'outsider' was not taken. Waterproofs and wellington boots in muted colours ensured homogeneity with other volunteers, avoiding looking 'out of place'.

During the participant observation, it was important to strike a balance between being an 'insider', allowing some familiarity with participants, and an 'outsider', not influencing the research outcomes. Throughout the study, a 'marginal' position to the group was taken (Vidich, 1955), as an observer-as-participant (Gold, 1957). Negotiating relationships with members enabled codes of behaviour present in volunteering to be understood. Previous experience of farm work, and gardening, aided an 'insider' status. It must be noted that the perception of CSA gained, would be different to a participant who was learning about food production for the first time.

Shurmer-Smith (2002) warns of excessive self-reflection, which can render the research too self-focused; instead, it should reflect on the research process itself. Observations could not be written

during the participant observation owing to the physical demand of the volunteering tasks. Therefore, a 10-minute note-taking period allowed observations made over the previous hour to be made in a field notebook (Appendix 1). To avoid disrupting the volunteering tasks, this session was undertaken away from the activity, ensuring that participants conducted themselves normally. An audio-recorder was available to record any noteworthy interactions throughout the day (Kearns, 2016). Appendix 2 details the aspects considered during the participant observation (Mack et al., 2005). One day of participant observation was conducted owing to the introduction of a national lockdown in March 2020. The participant observation day was cold and cloudy, which may have influenced the observations made.

3.4.2 Post Participant Observation

An extended observation summary was recorded at the end of the day, noting any relationships or interactions between the members (Appendix 3). The write-up was conducted same evening utilising Geertz's 'thick description'.

3.5 Interviews

The strength of interviews lies in their ability to investigate "*complex behaviours and motivations*" and collect "*a diversity of meaning, opinion and experiences*" (Dunn, 2016, p.150). Therefore, interviews provided a useful means of eliciting the experiences and memories of CSA members. There are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Semi-structured interviews utilize factual, descriptive, thoughtful and emotional questions (Longhurst, 2010). Owing to their flexibility and ability to draw out and follow unexpected narratives, this thesis used semi-structured interviews. This facilitated the spontaneous exploration of complex and unpredictable answers in greater depth (Valentine, 2005; Schnell, 2013). As one of the most-used qualitative methods (Kitchin and Tate, 2000), semi-structured interviews lend themselves to a study of different people's experiences and interpretations of the world (Shurmer-Smith, 2002). Interviewing members involved with different elements of CSA (from directors to volunteers), provided insights into the farms from varied perspectives. It was intended that the interviewees would be accessed through the gatekeeper, who would have selected a random sample of five CSA members involved with the CSA farm's different activities. However, due to COVID-19 only one was organised before the national lockdown. Subsequently, participants accessed to take part in the directives (discussed in Section 3.6) were given the option to take part in an interview instead.

3.5.1 Designing the Interview Schedule

The interview questions were organized thematically in response to the four research questions (Appendix 4). The interviews began with informal face-to-face conversations to build rapport and identify common interests. Initial questions prompted primary storytelling, providing participants with a sense of familiarity and ease (Longhurst, 2010). Interviews can become skewed towards more talkative informants - therefore, questions were posed using open ended prompts to avoid 'yes' or 'no' responses. This encouraged them to answer extensively. Conversational pauses were used to invoke more careful and considerate responses. Furthermore, novel and thought-provoking subjects brought up by participants were encouraged (Dunn, 2016). It can be the case, particularly in food systems research, that what people report does not translate into their real-world actions. It is important to be aware of the potential for hidden realities that interviews can fail to reveal (Valentine, 2005), particularly during subsequent data analysis.

3.5.2 Undertaking the Interview: From On-site to Zoom

Interview location can significantly impact research outcomes. Undertaking interviews in a space where interviewees feel comfortable can encourage more open and honest responses (Longhurst, 2010). Although originally intended to take place at the participants' respective CSA farms, only one out of the planned sample of 20 was conducted before the national lockdown. Four subsequent interviews took place over Zoom in the participants' homes. This allowed them to feel more comfortable, promoting more unreserved responses. However, resultly, body language and social cues could not be interpreted so readily. One advantage of interviews is being able to extract more than just verbal data. Although video conferencing software has improved significantly, providing a better representation of body language and social cues, this remained a challenge (Gray et al., 2020). To mitigate this, participants were requested to adjust the camera to show their upper body and face. Two test interviews were conducted to ensure that all equipment functioned correctly. Future research must recognise the potentially exclusionary nature of online interviews to those without internet connection or a computer.

Although 20 face-to-face interviews were initially intended, one was conducted face-to-face prior to the introduction of a national lockdown, and four were conducted subsequently over Zoom. Out of the interviewees, three were male and two were female, all were white and aged between 30 and 70 years old. Two of the interviewees were involved with Applewood Farm, and three were from Ferntree Farm. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 1 ½ hours where interviewees were more forthcoming. As more interviews were conducted, themes which members answered extensively, and those which elicited more muted responses, became apparent. For example, when

questioned about their first memories at the CSA farms, members expanded their answers with ease. However, questions regarding the educational remit of the farms received quieter responses, even following prompts. It is important to note, however, that the interview responses were highly varied; thus, adaptability was imperative to the success of the interviews.

3.5.3 Post Interviews

Following the interview, note-taking was conducted in a quiet location, recording any unexpected key themes or physical reactions (Longhurst, 2010). Interviews were transcribed manually as soon as possible to extract all possible analytical themes (Appendix 5).

3.6 Directives

Sensory data is an essential part of representing others in research (Pink, 2013). It was vital to find a method which accessed sensory and visceral experiential data at a distance, in place of participant observation. Directives are utilised by the Mass Observation Archive, comprising a series of open-ended questions and themes to which participants respond (Stenner et al., 2012). They access narrative data, which can reveal how embodied relationships form. Furthermore, they encourage storytelling, showing how individuals make sense of the world in relation to their food practices (Knight et al., 2015). Uprichard et al. (2013) explore 'food hates' using directives, accessing historical narratives, highlighting how they can invoke memories of visceral reactions relating to food practices. Hence, they could capture specific sensory experiences of volunteering, helping to reveal participants' relationships with their CSA farms.

Although interviews can reveal social relationships between humans, they often do not examine human relationships with nonhumans and landscapes (Knight et al., 2015). Macpherson (2010) investigates how the experiences of landscapes, embodiment and practices develop together. Directives can reveal embodied relationships between humans, nonhumans and landscapes (Sealey and Charles, 2013). They can determine how memory shapes and influences present day experiences (Macpherson, 2010). Recalling memories can evoke context-specific sensory data, providing an insight into an individual's relationships with their CSA farm (Bhatti et al., 2009). Directives give participants freedom to express opinions beyond socially-mediated answers and cues, owing to the distance from a researcher (Knight et al., 2015). Given more time to complete questions, participants can carefully consider their responses, and explore converging and contrasting ideas.

3.6.1 Designing the Directives

The directives were designed in line with the four research questions (Appendix 6). Open-ended questions allowed members to pursue areas which they regarded as relevant, providing an insight into their relationship with CSA. Questions encouraged individuals to elaborate and reflect on sensory experiences. One challenge, however, was the inability to ask participants to expand on certain points in real time, preventing further exploration of these topics. Therefore, the questions had to be broad enough to enable participants to discuss adequately what they viewed as the central topics. Despite this, the method mitigated potential impacts of leading questions, which can occur during interviews.

Photographs and audio recordings were requested to examine perspectives of the space, which helped understand what shaped a member's experiences beyond the scope of the questions. Directives were sent out through the gatekeepers who distributed them to the CSA farm members utilising email chains, posting the request for responses on social media and including it in their newsletters to prompt responses. In this way, a random sample of responses could be achieved. 21 directive responses were received from six different community farms. 12 were male and 9 were female. The age and the ethnicity of the participants were not of significance to the research project and so this information was not requested. Additionally, a survey conducted by Baxters Hill Farm was provided by their gatekeeper which proved valuable in illustrating the findings of the directives. A tapestry approach was utilised to analyse the data, further details of which are discussed in Section 3.9.

3.7 Discourse Analysis of Facebook Posts

A discourse analysis of the CSA farms' Facebook pages explored the relationship between the farms and their members, and how their narratives were constructed and negotiated online. Discourse analysis can illuminate taken-for-granted mechanisms behind social realities (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005). This made it useful for exploring the messages perpetuated by CSA farms on social media. Hajer and Versteeg (2005) explain that discourse analysis can reveal how subjects can be framed differently. It was, therefore, used to explore how CSA farms constructed arguments such as food scarcity and anxiety, or perpetuated binaries including nature/culture, or producer/consumer.

Hajer and Versteeg (2005, p.175) see discourse as "*an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices*". Discourse analysis allows researchers to trace linguistic regularities, and their variations (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005). It can reveal dominant discursive rhetoric and interactions between various groups or communities (Wetherell et al., 2001) including between CSA farms and their members. Furthermore, discourse analysis can highlight how

people understand their contextual realities (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005). Thus, it showed how CSA members made sense of the relationship between environmental concerns and everyday life in the context of social media (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998).

Social media sites can be arenas for social construction through which the participants of certain organizations may be analysed (Rock, 1999). Social media is now central to social interactions within western societies. Schatzki (2002) recognizes the necessity of context-dependent knowledge when examining everyday social practices. It was, therefore, important to account for the farms' online interactions with their members. However, CSA farms have a business interest in the content of their Facebook posts, meaning that their rhetoric may not be reflective of their realities. Nevertheless, social media can enable a unique research position, in becoming a participant of the online network (Piacenti et al., 2014), bridging separate framings of researcher and participant.

Online research methods can overcome spatial constraints of research (Gray et al., 2020). As such, the research was not restricted to examining those for whom the farms were accessible; members who could not visit the CSA farms could be included. This could also be exclusionary as not all members may have access to social media.

3.7.1 The Impact of COVID-19

Hajer and Versteeg (2005) emphasize how discourse analysis can interrogate moments in time where regularities and social norms are disrupted. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted people's lives and routines, particularly regarding food practices. Gill and Elder (2012) explain how online data can capture a snapshot of development over time. Chen and Tan (2019) argue that social media platforms may help CSA farms to connect consumers and producers, organizing activities and reinforcing social networks. Hence, it was a crucial site for investigating the CSA farm communities' discursive reactions to COVID-19, revealing their relationships with one another.

3.7.2 Conducting the Discourse Analysis

All Facebook posts of the four original CSA farms between 13th March and 6th June were collated in tabular format (Appendix 8) and commented on at the point of collection. Any notable thematic reflections were recorded at this time. In total 176 Facebook posts were analysed across the four farms. The data was explored iteratively alongside the interviews, directives and participant observation through the tapestry approach discussed in section 3.9.1.

3.8 Ethical considerations

It is essential to consider moral and ethical commitments throughout research, and to review moral codes and conduct when collecting data. Qualitative research methods are fundamentally political in their ability to alter the lives of subjects and privilege non-dominant knowledges (Smith, 2001). It is necessary contemplate how qualitative research may transform the lives of research participants (Kobayashi, 2001). Although there were no serious ethical concerns for this study, participants remained anonymous throughout, and pseudonyms were provided.

Consent to record the individuals was obtained before the interviews, with the assurance that the recording would be destroyed two years following their use. All participants engaged in the participant observation signed a consent form (Appendix 9).

3.9 Data Analysis

According to Sarah Pink (2013), data analysis is a way of knowing; a continuous process of examining a subject throughout research. It is, therefore, fundamentally iterative and concurrent with gathering data, reflected in the simultaneous data collection and analysis in this thesis. Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasize how this can help to build explanatory frameworks which can reveal relationships and negotiations between themes and narratives. Furthermore, uncovering repeated patterns and key themes facilitates a layered and in-depth analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Identifying recurring themes within qualitative data can reveal underlying practices and social processes. During the interview transcription and participant observation write up, initial readings of the directives and collection of the Facebook posts, topics of interest were acknowledged and added to the list of themes, cross-cutting themes and memos. Following an initial reading of the interviews, participant observation, directives and Facebook posts, emergent and unexpected themes were recorded. This provided an overview of the participants' consensus, and any underlying processes occurring. Three key themes were identified, according to which the data were coded (Appendix 10). As this was concurrent with data collection, when additional data were collected, all data were re-reviewed to reveal any emerging processes and practices. According to Law (2004), this iterative process can afford a performative and progressive research procedure. Once the data collection had ceased, the coded points were organised thematically, after which they were revised again to draw out sub-themes. The data sets were then cross analysed according to the themes to identify any common narratives or cross-cutting themes. Following Sandover (2013), the themes were plotted on a colour coded map (Figure 1). Under each theme, the subthemes were noted and connected to others, highlighting the cross-cutting themes. This helped to identify both superficial and in-depth patterns and processes (Jackson, 2001).

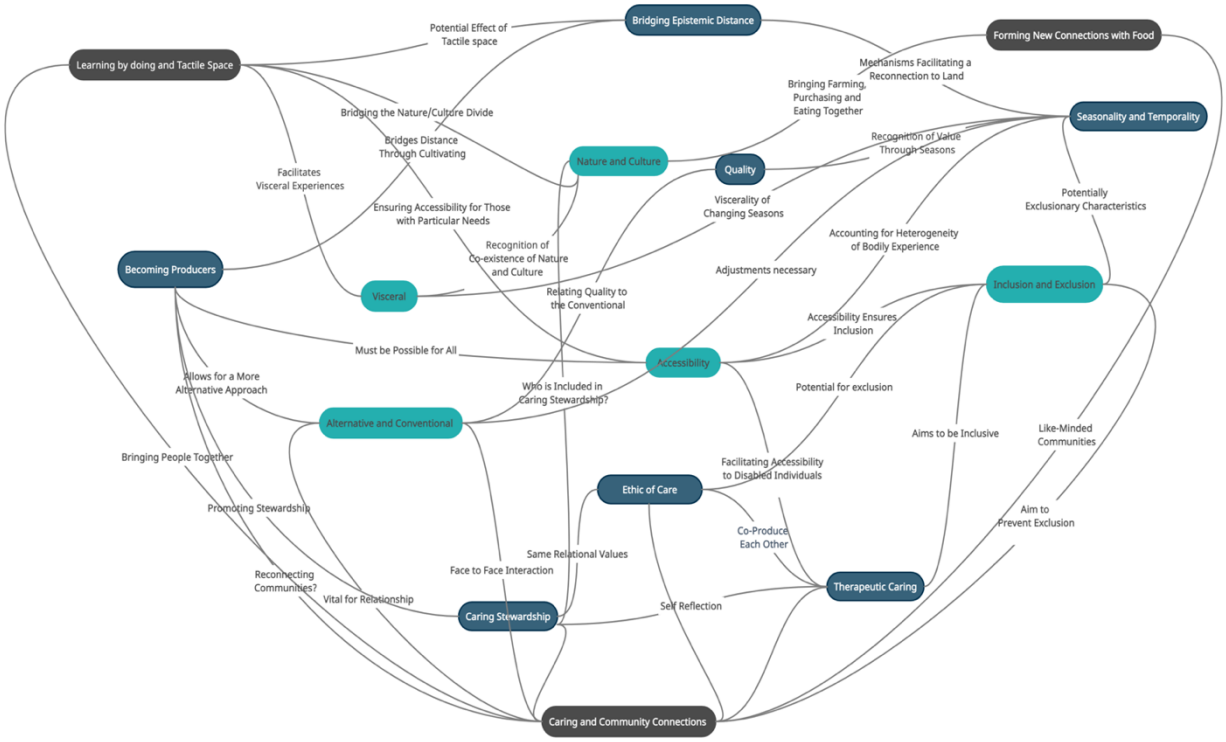

Figure 1: Map of Themes, Sub-Themes and Cross-Cutting Themes.

Memo writing (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was employed to consider developing themes and narratives. Coding was undertaken by hand, facilitating an appreciation of the nuances in emerging ideas (Blunt, 2003). This allowed more care to be taken in extracting and examining cross-cutting themes. Welsh (2002) questions whether themes can emerge organically through coding software, or whether it prevents deeper comprehension of the data. Once theoretical saturation had been reached (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), the data were organised according to the following narrative themes.

- Learning by 'doing' and Tactile space
- Care and Community Connections
- Forming New Connections with Food

3.9.1 The 'Tapestry' Approach

Riessman (1990) expresses frustration with uses of grounded theory, which fail to champion individuals' portrayal of stories and themes resulting in fractured data. Given the multifaceted and varied nature of the dataset, this approach would not capture participants' storied responses, in conjunction with the participant observation and sensory experiences. Hence, a narrative approach connected the themes across different CSA farms through storied, emotional, and sensory data (Polkinghorne, 1995). This qualitative analysis revealed common themes in individual's perceptions of

the world (Valentine, 2005), which constituted their knowledge and communication (Hinchman and Hinchman, 1997). Therefore, the participants' stories were woven together using the thematic threads to facilitate a contextual understanding of how CSA experiences influenced members.

Researchers are responsible for representing participants' voices (Limb and Dwyer, 2001). They can never fully know the world, only produce a representation of it, and so must recognise how their identity may influence the research (Valentine, 2005). Nevertheless, Rose (1997) notes that researchers cannot always fully articulate their own positionality. Thus, when weaving narratives together, previous experience of gardening and producing food was considered. Care was taken to ensure that these experiences did not influence the induction of themes during the analysis.

3.10 Limitations

Although some limitations have already been acknowledged, further limitations present in the methodology were identified. The adaptation of the methodology away from an ethnographic approach left an asymmetric examination of the different CSA farms. However, adopting a tapestry approach which weaved together the different narratives to explore emerging themes, processes and practices mitigated any negative effects. The value-action gap describes instances where participants provide answers which differ from their actions (Blake, 1999), where they feel pressure to act in line with what is societally perceived as 'good'. For example, although members may have said that they relied on CSA for much of their produce, this may not be the case. Therefore, caution must be taken when extrapolating this data to a broader scale.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has explained how data was collected and analysed in this research project. It was essential throughout the project to remain flexible and pragmatic, owing to the uncertain conditions of this research design process. Resultantly, a mixed-method analysis enabled the collection of both embodied and sensory, and descriptive and explanatory data regarding the different CSA farms.

Chapter 4: Learning, Growing, Caring, Eating

4.1 Becoming Producers through Learning-by-Doing

This section explores how CSA farms can help members to learn to produce their own food, and in doing so, nurture their sensory connections to the environment to realise the need for food system sustainability. It examines the narratives of reconnection and disconnection through the context of CSA. Next, it investigates how CSA may allow agri-food literature to move beyond the labels of producers and consumers, examining the negotiations of power and agency, and the challenges associated with this, acknowledging their need for flexibility. Finally, the section posits that CSA farms can provide spaces for skill sharing and innovation in food systems, looking at CSA farms' responses to COVID-19 as a case study.

4.1.1 Learning as a Producer: Cultivating Environmental Appreciation

CSA addresses the sense of disempowerment felt by both consumers and producers in food systems (Kneafsey et al., 2008). The previously asymmetric consideration of production and consumption in agri-food literature during the early 2000s (Lockie and Kitto, 2000) has rendered current frameworks for exploring the spaces in which the two practices overlap, insufficient. Thus, in order to consider how CSA may engender environmental appreciation, in both producer and consumer mindsets, it is necessary to consider a more relational approach (Goodman, 2002). Although calls for the two to be considered relationally resurfaced in the late 2000s (e.g., Fonte, 2008; Kneafsey et al., 2008), these left the production/consumption dualism intact. Holloway et al. (2008) suggest examining the two in more relational terms and conceptualising these relationships as heterogeneous. An exploration of the mechanisms through which, in CSA farms, consumers may assimilate into a producer role is, therefore, needed to move beyond this. This may contribute to greater understandings of food system sustainability from a more holistic perspective.

Epistemic distance presents challenges to aligning consumer concerns with agricultural production (Carolan, 2007). Giving CSA members the opportunity to learn to produce food sustainably helped to bridge this divide. Some members joined for *"the opportunity to learn about the origins and impact of the food we consume"* (Linda, Directive, 2020). Zachary recalled an individual in his CSA, who "*was learning about organic and biodynamic farming so that he could take it back to India*" (Zachary, Directive, 2020). Furthermore, Robert noted "*I also wanted to learn about organic growing, with the intention of putting that knowledge to use in my own back garden"* (Robert, Directive, 2020). Learning sustainable agricultural practices incentivised members to join CSA farms.

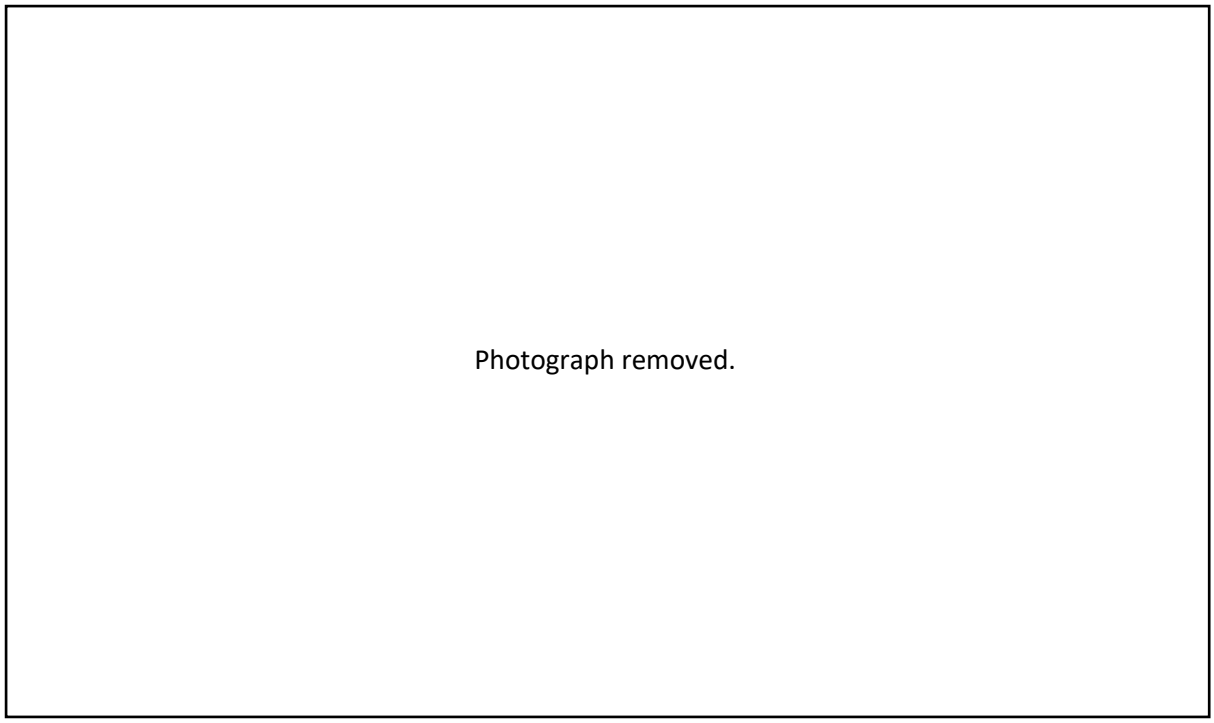

Figure 2: CSA members working collaboratively (Amelia, Directive, 2020).

According to Crouch (2003), volunteering can engage communities in cultivation, physically and socially. Learning about food production took different forms in the various CSA farms. Elaine discussed the range of activities including *"Digging, harvesting, weeding, planting, watering"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). At Ferntree Farm, members first learnt a range of techniques, before being assigned to a particular group. Amelia explained that there was a "*team of rovers, who are often new members who can rove around and help wherever it is needed"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020) (Figure 2). However, here education was "*not a really formalised part of the project"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). In Baxters Hill Farm, members expressed a desire for *"more structure around a possible learning program for people who are looking to learn the basics then the advance methods*" (Miles, Directive, 2020), thus highlighting the scope for more formalised learning programmes. Indeed, official educational events were not the only way that members learnt to identify the importance of food system sustainability. Amelia saw that *"what's working is us being a demonstration farming project"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020), adding "*this is about collectively … producing our own food and demonstrating that by doing that, this is a viable, resilient food system"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). It is, therefore, important to recognise the effectiveness of informal educational strategies at some CSA farms. It was evident that involvement with Baxters Hill Farm had provided food system knowledge. In a survey conducted by Baxters Hill Farm, 38% of members agreed, and 21% strongly agreed with the statement "I have a better understanding of organic food and farming", and only 1 out of 47 members surveyed disagreed (Figure 3).

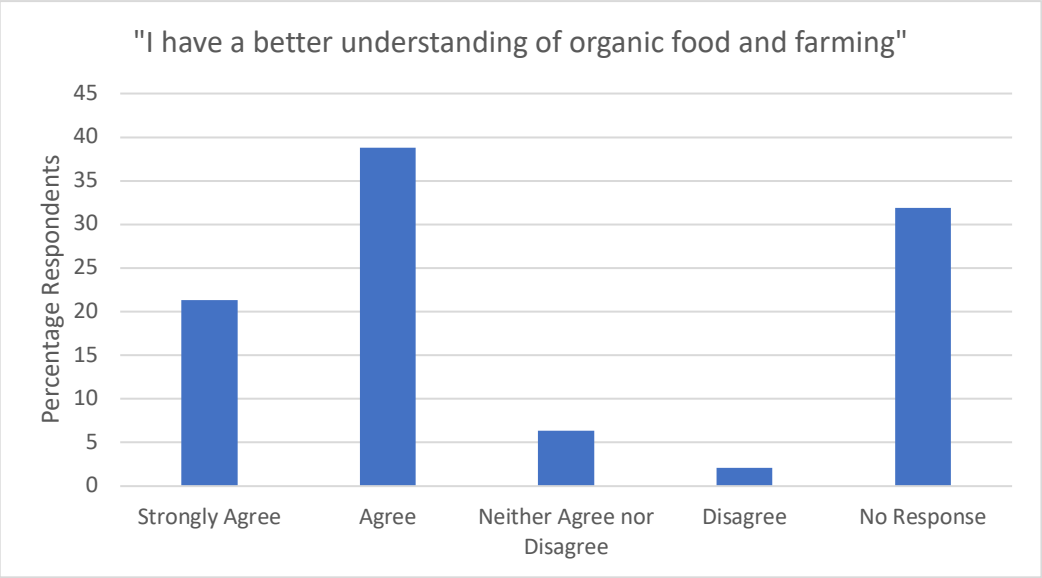

Figure 3: Figure showing the distribution of responses to the statement "I have a better understanding of organic food and farming".

Learning to produce food can, therefore, help consumers become aware of the need for sustainability, through realising the connection between the environment and food production (Wells and Gradwell, 2001). This was evident in the members' responses; David commented that his involvement had *"helped [him] to think seriously about the problems this must cause farmers*" (David, Directive, 2020) when considering adverse weather. This had prompted Robert to think more about the challenges that producers face:

"I got a better understanding of how to organise planting on a more commercial scale, factoring in crop rotation and productivity/supply & demand. Balancing production with customer demand being a key concern that I had never considered before, as well as consideration of which crops may generate more revenue. I understand more now about managing a box scheme and fruit/veg wholesaling (which I find really interesting), the process that goes on between planting and growing in the fields and getting a quality veg box to customers' doors." (Robert, Directive, 2020)

In learning to produce food, therefore, CSA members may feel more agency to make a difference to food system sustainability. Cameron et al. (2011) similarly explore how such encounters can demonstrate the realities of climate change to individuals. Rory explained that Applewood Farm had allowed him *"to experience the challenges of achieving sustainability at a local, practical level"* (Rory, Directive, 2020). Enabling members to undertake first-hand problem-solving associated with a changing environment helped them to realise their ability to contribute to more sustainable food systems.

4.1.2 Learning as a Producer: Developing Sensory Connections to Food production.

Through volunteering, CSA members formed non-cognitive understandings (Thrift, 2004) and became aware of the sensory 'language' of food production. The physicality involved in learning to produce food provoked a spectrum of reactions from members. Some were prepared for the challenges of food production: Amelia reflected *"I was very aware of the reality of the fact that you're going to be walking through a foot of mud for three months"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). In some cases, embodied knowledge grew gradually. One reflection during the participant observation read "*the mud stuck in thick clumps to our boots*" (Participant Observation, 2020) with note to the "*thick, muddy smell*" (Participant Observation, 2020) in the air (Figure 4). This adversely affected the members, one observation noting "*the mood having distinctly lowered"* (Participant Observation, 2020). Although this may disincentivise some members from volunteering, it may also retune their embodied appreciation of agriculture (Carolan, 2011), helping them to recognise the challenges of food production. Indeed, a spectrum of reactions (not just positive or negative) are essential for enriching experiences of food production spaces (Herman, 2015).

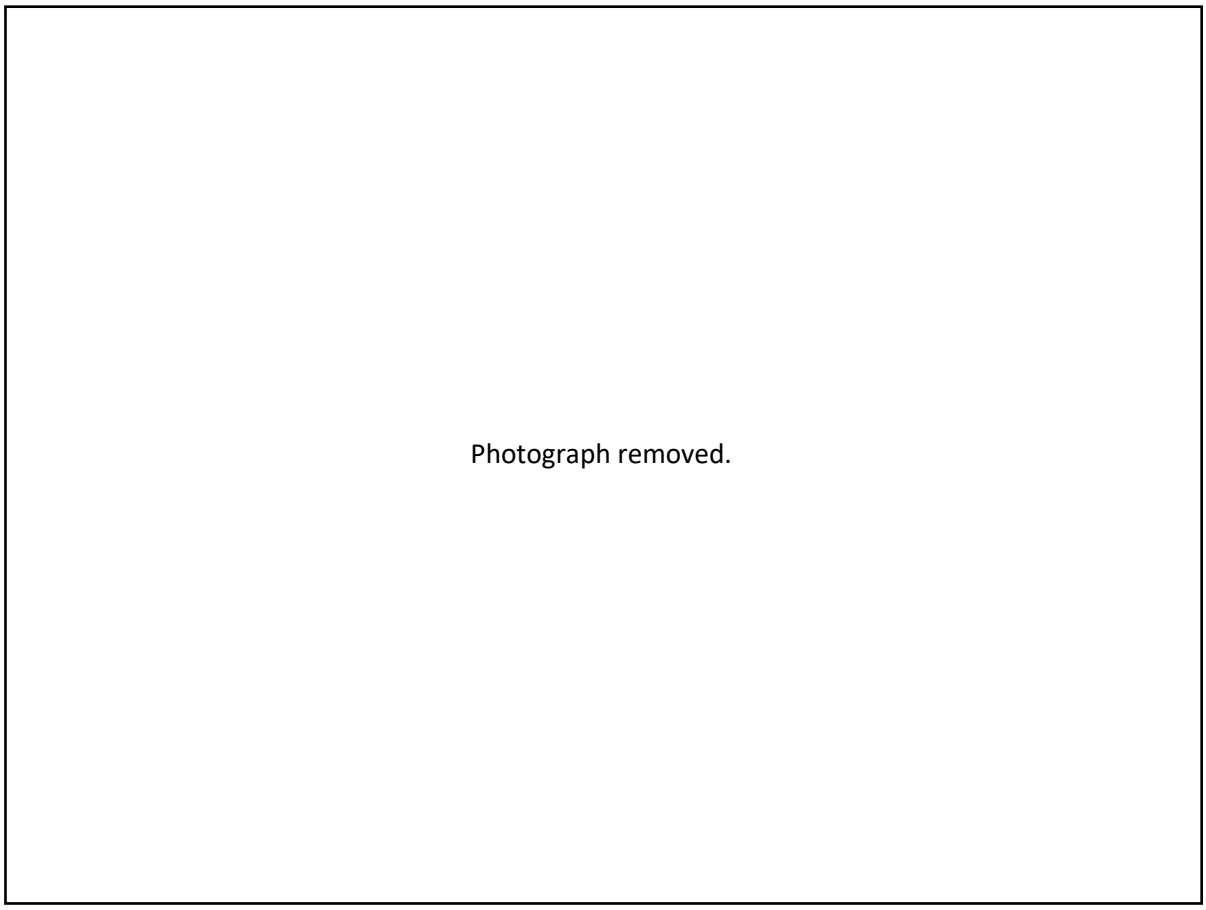

Figure 4: Clearing scrubland (Participant Observation, 2020).

Embodied, lived experiences in tactile space (Carolan, 2007) helped members to see the capacity for nonhumans to enact agency on them through a range of emotions. This developed subtly, through growing connections to the farm. Robert's description of his CSA farm demonstrated how volunteering could form corporeal recognition of food production:

"*It's a beautiful location, very peaceful and allows you to feel more connected to the food production process. It's very satisfying to see what immediate impact your efforts can have (turning a massive patch of dock leaves into a clear bed, seeing several neat rows of seedlings that you've just planted, etc) - for those of us whose working lives are full of meetings and emails, it makes a refreshing change. And having volunteered over the whole growing season it's great to see how the farm has evolved over the months and role you've played in that process*." (Robert, Directive, 2020).

For Ravenscroft et al. (2012), CSA can generate individual transitional and learning. Through this, members may see how their actions impact nonhumans and landscapes. Furthermore, experiences of reward often outweighed the challenges, encouraging individuals to remain members.

Volunteering helped to bridge dualistic conceptions of nature and culture as separate entities in food production. For Thrift (2000), an idea of the 'natural' is constructed through embodied unconsciousness; "*the body produces spaces and times through the things of nature which, in turn, inhabit the body through that production*" (Thrift, 2000, p.47). The participant observation revealed how a recognition of oneself in relation to landscapes may form through volunteering. One passage explained "*I found myself understanding more about the different plants, and how they were dealt with"* and "*I learnt a way of hooking them round my gloves"* (Participant Observation, 2020). This demonstrated how embodied experiences can develop new perceptions of the natural world, resituating individuals' concerns for the environment (Macnaghten, 2003). Additionally, one note taken during participant observation read "*I felt the roots snap apart...the snaps reverberated through the fork into my hands...it struck me how much you could feel"* (Participant Observation, 2020). This illustrated Carolan's (2007) tactile space, through the blurring of the sensor and sensible whereby the body interacted with the world in a de-centred manner. These processes helped CSA members to consider themselves, not as divided from the natural world, but connected to it through horizontalized relationships. Through this, "*reflexive ethical reasoning*" can arise (Carolan, 2011, p.58), whereby members attribute more value to nature by recognising their presence within it.

Through volunteering, therefore, members saw how they influenced the environment, affirming Thrift's (2000) acknowledgement of the importance of cultivating a deeper appreciation of the way that bodies know the world. However, it was where both tacit learning and formal educational strategies were employed by CSA farms that members best understood their impact on the environment. For Rory (Interview, 2020), in addition to the *"food workshops…butchery*

workshops…farm walks with a talk by the farmer", his practical involvement had helped him to *"understand something of the type of work that's being done and what people are trying to achieve … [and] why it makes a difference"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). Thus, developing minded bodies through conscious sensory engagements, and holistic learning strategies is vital for negotiating beyond dualisms present in considerations of food systems (McWhorter, 1999, cited in Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008). Nevertheless, it is important to note that as humans live through the body in unique ways (Lorimer, 2005), members experience CSA differently. It is essential not to extrapolate individual experiences to entire populations, instead seeing that CSA can form these values on an individual scale.

4.1.3 Challenging the Narratives of Disconnection and Reconnection?

Narratives of disconnection were ubiquitous within members' responses. It was widely considered that young people were particularly 'disconnected' from food production. Colquhoun and Lyon (2001) emphasise the necessity of educating young people on sustainable food production, particularly in urban areas. Rory exclaimed *"how can you get to 7 years old and have no idea where a carrot comes from?"* (Rory, Directive, 2020). For Martin, *"the need to help the next generation to understand local sustainable farming."* (Martin, Directive, 2020) motivated him to join the farm. Many of the CSA farms organised events to help children learn about food production. Wychdale Farm posted on Facebook *"the children were taken on farm tours to learn about the different stages of crop production, spotting wildlife, tasting fruit and veg"* (Wychdale Farm, Facebook, 2020). At Oaklands Farm *"Pupils came to learn how to plant potatoes and discover where their food comes from"* (Diane, Directive, 2020). These projects aimed to reconnect young people with the origins of their food.

CSA participation can directly reacquaint members with food production. Many farms market themselves as promoting lifestyles which 'reconnect' individuals with the land through volunteering (Dowler et al., 2009). One of the strongest sentiments expressed by CSA participants was the desire to 'return to nature', Zachary wanting to *"get involved in a real working farm"* (Zachary, Directive, 2020). He showed an inclination for *"going back to a simple life in the countryside*", emphasising *"I just really got into, sort of the nature and, you know, just enjoying the outdoor world"* (Zachary, Directive, 2020). However, care must be taken when idealising a romanticised 'reconnection' with the natural world, as this assumes disconnection from food systems (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007).

The notion of 'disconnection' was not accurate in most members. Although many had backgrounds in office-based employment, their interest in food production and nature had always existed. Maria explained "*I have always been interested in organic farming and wildlife"* (Maria, Directive, 2020). Many members related their interest in food production to childhood memories of

helping in the garden. Valerie commented *"I have always liked growing things and being out of doors"* (Valerie, Directive, 2020). It is evident here that CSA feeds an existing desire to be with nature. For David, as a child *"being outside and making things outside and working on outdoor projects was important."* he added *"I've always had an interest in the natural world"* (David, Directive, 2020). The validity of Kolodinsky and Pelch's (1997) claim for reconnection can be questioned, as many members were never disconnected. Therefore, the narrative of disconnection itself, as an assumed reality in agri-food literature may be challenged.

The ability of CSA farms to create sustainable values by 'reconnecting' members with the land may also be questioned, as many had prior commitments to sustainability. Elaine *"had previous experiences of involvement with permaculture, with a local food coop, of volunteering to support a market garden, of the Transition Network and ideas around food security"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). Amelia considered "*my sense is that the vast majority of members, and I count myself in this, had an interest in sustainability before coming to the project"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). Distance from routine home life and work has been increasingly regarded as a valuable commodity (Conradson, 2005). Is CSA engagement, therefore, more superficial than a commitment to a sustainable lifestyle, or rather an escape from daily life? Amelia commented "*I wouldn't say that my views on sustainability itself have fundamentally changed but what has become really apparent to me is the need for involving the broader public in human scale demonstration."* (Amelia, Directive, 2020). The role of CSA farms in creating sustainable values may, therefore, be questioned.

4.1.4 Beyond Producers and Consumers: Power and Agency in Consumers-As-Producers

Agri-food literature has previously left the spheres of producer and consumer and, therefore, the problematic negotiations of power accompanying this, intact. Although CSA farms have been discussed as hybrid spaces (Ilbery and Maye, 2005), this does little to move beyond these designations. Producing their own food allowed members to move beyond considering themselves as either producers or consumers, thus disrupting the often-problematic relationships of power caused by this (Holloway et al., 2007). Amelia stressed *"I don't consider myself a volunteer"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020), instead viewing members of her CSA farm as *"paid up official owners of a co-operative"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). This was similar in Oaklands Farm, where Natalie explained "we *grow food primarily for those of us who work there"* (Natalie, Interview, 2020). This rendered the labels insufficient for examining the power relationships between participants of CSA farms.

Moving beyond the producer/consumer dualism can address the disempowerment caused by decreasing supermarket transparency. Rory articulated *"When I went to the supermarket to shop, it was a chore – something to get done as fast as possible*" (Rory, Interview, 2020). The CSA farms aimed

to re-empower their members by involving them in produce distribution. Ferntree Farm used a marketplace system (Figure 5) where members both bought and sold produce. Phillip discussed that "*people who've grown the vegetable are talking about what they've grown and what's coming next"* (Phillip, Interview, 2020). This demonstrated how members developed a sense of ownership over the produce. Amelia described the effect of this:

"*I feel that sense of, I've seeded that, I've grown that I've got it here as produce, I know the effort and the work that goes into it, which, I think when you purchase something in the supermarket, it's really dislocated, you know that link between the farmer and the growing and the consuming, is totally broken"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020).

In this way, members' place-based connections to their CSA farm were also strengthened (Kneafsey, 2010). Involving members in distributing produce encouraged them to consider ethical relationships beyond the market exchanges characteristic of mainstream hegemonic agriculture.

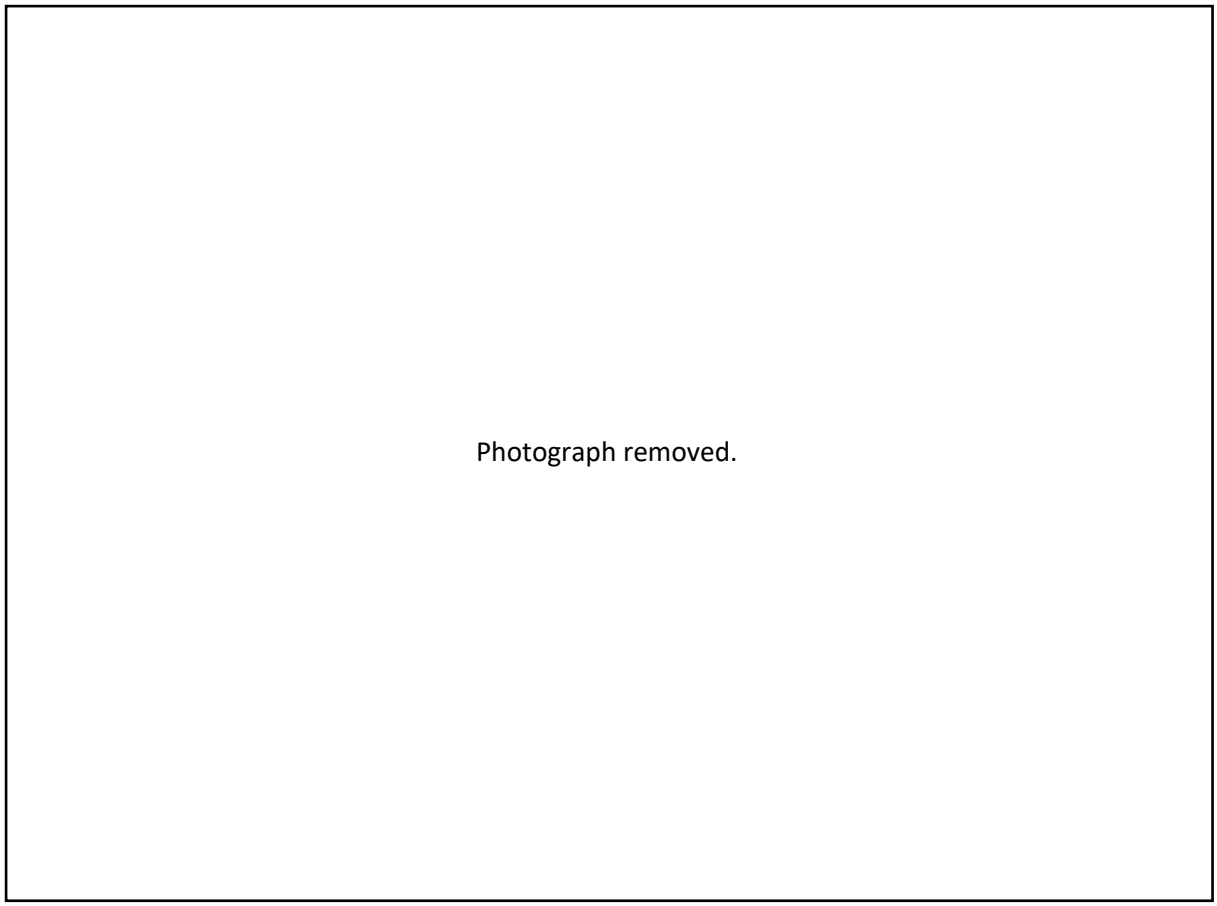

Figure 5: Gourds in the Marketplace (Amelia, Interview, 2020).

Where some CSA farms operated more 'conventional' models of food distribution, separation between consumer and producer roles was more apparent. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Applewood Farm posted on Facebook "*remember to be nice to our shop staff and our butchers – they are working under a great deal of pressure at the moment"* (Facebook, 2020) reinforcing the division

between those purchasing and selling food. This separation also extended to decision-making. Some CSA farms, whilst acknowledging their volunteers' opinions, made decisions through committees. Christine explained that at her farm "*team leaders advise on what needs to be done, and in turn there are expert growers"* (Christine, Interview, 2020). Some members valued not having to make crucial decisions. According to David:

"On the farm there are a variety of people – some who have a good deal of knowledge who are often teaching or facilitating others, some who lead and come up with ideas and projects, and a good number who are more than happy to get stuck in and complete the task required" (David, Directive, 2020).

Despite having prior knowledge, they were happy to follow instructions. Elaine stated, *"I didn't (and don't) see myself as any sort of expert and pretty much did as I was told*", adding *"I wanted to connect with, and support [Ferntree Farm] but didn't want to manage it"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). Therefore, most farms allowed members the freedom to take on a role which suited them.

Nevertheless, it is essential to account for the heterogeneity of experiences in CSA farms. The varied CSA models incurred different negotiations of power and agency, influencing the role into which members assimilated. Some farms could not operate through more structured governance. Elaine considered that at her CSA farm, "*if someone became involved who had a more 'principled' and perhaps less flexible/ pragmatic stance then it could lead to difficulties*" (Elaine, Directive, 2020). Other CSA models used collective decision making. Amelia saw value in "*governing by consensus rather than by telling people what to do"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). She furthered *"I could go along and say, "actually what I really think we should be doing is this", and they would probably say put a group together, and kind of come up with a proposal, and put it to them"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). This helped members to recognise their agency to produce their own food and contribute to environmental sustainability. This was the case for Christine, who was *"experimenting with one or two things on [her] allotment such as perennial kale and perennial onions"* (Christine, Interview, 2020). Thus, CSA farms can afford members autonomy from hegemonic food systems through a growing capacity to produce their own food (Thrift, 2004).

CSA farms can increase their member's sense of autonomy by promoting feelings of responsibility over food production. Elaine described the effect of this, explaining "*it slowly dawned on me that I had become part of a group and that membership of it carried some responsibilities",* adding, *"there were issues raised where I had a view and joined in more"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). Hence, a member's sense of agency may change as they become more invested in the farm. Rory *"became a shareholder, and joined the Co-op committee"* (Rory, Interview, 2020), assimilating into more of a governing role and becoming involved with decision-making, contradicting previous

perceptions of consumers as passive (Goodman and DuPuis, 2002). Challenging the divisions of producers and consumers can empower members to form their own identities undefined by hegemonic food systems (Lacy, 2000).

4.1.5 Challenges in Consumers-as-Producers

Although member involvement in food production was beneficial to the CSA farms, there were also challenges that accompanied this. For many members, this was not a full-time job, which created conflicts of responsibility. This was articulated by Elaine, who noted "*with barely adequate numbers of volunteers and perhaps over-optimistic planting the crops can be inadequately tended. Weeding and watering can suffer. Harvesting at the wrong time"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). The lack of commitment to farming as a full-time job could cause food production to suffer.

These issues were exacerbated during the COVID-19 crisis. At Oaklands Farm "*The number of active volunteers was barely enough to make the enterprise viable in the pre-covid-19 environment"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). For some CSA farms, food production took precedence over community, with all but one of the farms examined preventing public access. Applewood Farm announced, *"our top priority at the moment is meeting your food needs in the farm shop"* (Facebook, 2020), and Baxters Hill Farm announced that they had *"made the difficult decision to suspend volunteer activities and all events on our land until further notice"* (Facebook, 2020). Some CSA farms, however, relied on member involvement to maintain food production. Wychdale Farm posted "*As both producers and distributors of food, we count as key workers"* (Facebook, 2020). Where member involvement facilitated the CSA farm's food production continuous involvement was vital.

4.1.6 The Need for Flexibility in CSA

These challenges underlined the need for the CSA farms to ensure member resubscription from year to year (Haney et al., 2015). Hence, it was important for farms to be flexible with differing levels of member engagement. According to Valerie, it was *"about allowing everyone to make their own contributions, whilst maintaining a central focus of providing food locally for local people"* (Valerie, Directive, 2020). More flexibility could encourage individuals to join on their own terms. Amelia emphasised this:

"It's not this really strange abstract concept where you have to give up everything that you love in order to be, you know, a complete activist-based vegan who only works on an organic farm, you know, it doesn't need to be that extreme, because for some people that's too far, too much" (Amelia, Interview, 2020).

As Amelia makes clear, allowing manageable contributions to CSA farms can ensure their durability.

Although flexibility was important for some CSA farms, others functioned effectively through their organisation. Amelia praised Ferntree Farm for its "*very clear governance*" (Amelia, Interview, 2020), explaining that "*It's made very clear what the expectations are, and if I'm honest, I think that's what makes it function so well"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). She added, *"You are required to commit to at least 10 hours of work a month and that is a very clear expectation"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). Christine also commented *"We were incredibly impressed when we first went down because it was so systematic"* (Christine, Interview, 2020). Although Haney et al. (2015) find that most people are willing to accommodate these lifestyle changes, this commitment could prove exclusionary where this cannot be accommodated into their everyday lives. The variation between different CSA models highlights the importance of recognising their contextual and situational nature. Where one model works for one CSA farm, it may not work for another.

4.1.7 Can CSA Create Spaces for Skill Sharing and Innovation?

Bringing together members from different career backgrounds and previous experiences encouraged knowledge sharing within the CSA farms (Albrecht and Smithers, 2018). The farms attracted members who wished to move away from an office-based environment. Ellen explained "*It's made me realise that my stupid job looking into a laptop needs to change. Now I want to grow carrots, keep chickens and be part of something real*" (Ellen, Directive, 2020). This was generally perceived positively by the members, Amelia noting *"It's a really nice opportunity to work with like-minded people who all have different interests and skills and experiences"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). Zachary recalled *"My background in the city was more in finance so I'm interested in the financial side of how it would work as well"* (Zachary, Directive, 2020). Therefore, different skills and knowledge brought by participants could help the CSA farms evolve.

CSA farms utilise members' pre-existing skills to contribute to food system innovation. At Ferntree Farm, one participant had brought their knowledge of farming in Africa and had *"used some of the techniques from mulching the plots"* (Christine, Interview, 2020). This transfer of information was reciprocal, some members using techniques learnt from the farms for their own gardens and allotments. Phillip considered *"There are people who have more really interesting ideas about the way they do things, and some of those things have rubbed off on us"* (Phillip, Interview, 2020). Reciprocal knowledge sharing can promote sustainable innovation in food systems by utilising member's different backgrounds and disciplines.

4.1.7.1 Case Study: Technological Response to COVID-19

According to Beck (1992) whilst during crises some may be paralysed by inaction, creative and inventive solutions can also emerge. During the COVID-19 pandemic, some CSA farms made obvious improvements. Previously, wastage was often a problem, Elaine noting "*Some of our harvested greens and salads are wilting before the end of the end of our session"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). Ferntree Farm improved this during the COVID-19 pandemic, their food now going *"into a cold store in an insulated building where people can then help themselves"* (Phillip, Interview, 2020). This crisis leapfrogged necessary farm improvements, making them more efficient in the long term.

Increased demand following the announcement of the national lockdown also necessitated logistical improvements, the growth in vegbox purchases proving challenging. Many CSA farms had to prevent customers from placing orders to be able to fulfil existing ones. Wychdale Farm announced, "*Due to the high demand we are facing, customers can no longer place new orders*" (Facebook, 2020). However, technological improvements helped farms manage this. Applewood Farm introduced a food delivery service, posting "[*Applewood Farm] is now launching a local food delivery service for those in need"* (Facebook, 2020). Wychdale Farm announced, "*We are packing 50% more vegboxes than we were two months ago*" (Facebook, 2020) highlighting their capacity improvements.

4.1.8 Summary

Examining the processes of learning and developing connections in CSA farms has revealed how they can empower individuals to produce food themselves. Engaging people with food production, CSA can help them to develop sensory connections to nonhumans and landscapes, showing them the need for sustainable food systems. This revealed the necessity of investigating individual experiences of CSA farms, not homogenising them into one. This section has challenged the narratives of disconnection whist questioning the validity of claims for reconnection. In doing so, it has explored the negotiations of power in the relationships between producers and consumers, exploring how CSA can cut across these dualisms. Thus, it has acknowledged the challenges associated with greater consumer involvement in food production, ultimately emphasising the need to afford CSA members flexibility. Finally, this section has explored how bringing members of food systems with different backgrounds together has created spaces for skill sharing, thereby promoting innovation, demonstrated by the advancements made during the COVID-19 crisis.

4.2 Caring Practice and Community in CSA Farms.

By encouraging caring relationships, CSA farms can create a sense of community through varied processes and practices. This section examines how these relationships may form and the extent to which this can develop longstanding commitments to sustainability. It is important to acknowledge the multiple, shifting caring relationships present in CSA farms, and how these interact, intersect with, and resist one another (Dowler et al., 2009). The caring practices examined will be an ethic of care, understood as a way of relating to others through a sense of regard (Conradson, 2003), a sense of caring stewardship towards the environment (West et al., 2018), and therapeutic caring practices. The latter relates to those often explored through care farms (Hine et al., 2008; Charles, 2011).

This section first examines why an ethic of care, and a sense of community are central to CSA farms. Following this, it looks at how CSA farms foster and develop commitments through welcome and inclusivity, and through place-based member involvement. It then explores how these relationships may extend outside the farms, and whether they facilitate accessibility and inclusivity, and health and wellbeing. Finally, the norms, dynamics and challenges to CSA communities, which do not necessarily constitute caring relationships are examined, using examples from the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2.1 Why are Caring Communities Important to CSA Farms?

CSA responds to a perceived loss of connections between and within communities. This was of concern to the CSA members, Rory commenting *"One of the things that the modern world is losing is community"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). The prospect of a caring community based on similar mindsets and mutual beliefs incentivised individuals to connect with their CSA farm, echoing Lang's (2010) findings of motivations for participation. Elaine's preconceptions of her farm was that she "*expected to find like-minded people…and to establish local connections within a new community"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). David was *"looking for a community to be part of where [he] could be involved based on a common interest and working together"* (David, Directive, 2020). This echoed Pole and Gray's (2013) conclusion that a sense of community motivates individuals to join CSA farms.

CSA farms can tackle social isolation and loneliness, particularly for retirees, addressing the individualism of an increasingly globalised world (Zepeda and Li, 2006). Matthew joined because he *"wanted something to replace the social aspects of work"*. He further commented that "*having retired from work it would have been easy to become socially isolated and lose a sense of purpose. Regular volunteering has helped with this"* (Matthew, Directive, 2020). 33 out of 48 surveyed respondents from Baxters Hill Farm wanted more projects which brought people together to tackle issues such as isolation. Developing a sense of community was essential for confronting social challenges.

Carolan (2011) explains how strong communities can develop robust food networks. By bringing people seeking a stronger sense of community together, CSA farms may concomitantly encourage deeper concerns for sustainability in members. Fostering these attitudes through multifaceted caring relationships ensured their durability (Carolan, 2011). Rory stated, *"My only belief is that probably the best route to a deep connection is through volunteering"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). He added *"If you can get somebody volunteering regularly … they can't help but start to feel a deep connection … it's a very powerful psychological thing that if you volunteer for an organisation you start to support it"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). Thus, CSA farms must foster strong community values to develop their members' commitments to sustainability.

4.2.2 Fostering and Developing Commitment through Caring

According to Hinrichs (2000), one of the greatest challenges for CSA organisers is the pressure to retain members. As previously discussed, CSA farms must encourage members to commit long-term to ensure their durability. For many farms, forming communities was a central objective, with Elaine noting that at her farm *"the primary output is community"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). Rory's "*first and foremost connection [was] about community"* and *"connecting people to the farm"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). Rory's commitment to his CSA farm had evolved over the years. He reflected on:

"joining the [Applewood] management team as a community volunteer for about a year … helping to organise open days, participating in volunteer events such as tree-planting, and, finally, agreeing to become a volunteer non-executive director of [Applewood] in early 2016. This lasted a year, and ended when I was offered work at the farm. I have been employed at [Applewood] since February 2017" (Rory, Directive, 2020).

For him, what began as participating in an open day had developed into a lifetime commitment. Natalie's commitment had emerged from experiencing an ethic of care at her CSA farm, feeling that her work was valued. She reflected *"going down there over the years… I feel my contribution is valued and appreciated"* (Natalie, Interview, 2020). Feelings of appreciation can encourage members to maintain their involvement (Ostrom, 2007). Therefore, in upholding an ethic of care, CSA farms can ensure their durability.

4.2.2.1 Creating a Welcoming, Caring Environment

An ethic of care was central to how the CSA farms fostered a sense of community. Ostrom (2007) considers community to be a key incentive for setting up CSA farms. Creating a welcoming environment drew first-time visitors into an initial engagement with the farm. Robert detailed his first impressions, commenting "*The community farmers are kind and encouraging. Everyone I've met on*

the farm is friendly and open" (Robert, Directive, 2020). This was echoed by others: Amelia recounted her initial visit, stating *"I was met by some really friendly members who just sort of waved and said, we don't know you, are you a new member? ... I mean it was very friendly, very welcoming"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). Rory reflected on the effect of this, describing his first experience of the farm as "*one of the most memorable experiences of [his] life"* (Rory, Directive, 2020). For Natalie, this feeling of welcome confirmed her commitment. She noted *"I was made to feel very welcome by the members and knew straightaway that I wanted to commit wholeheartedly to the project"* (Natalie, Interview, 2020). These accounts from members at different stages of their involvement highlight that creating a caring environment ensured that those considering joining, committed, promoting an active and engaged CSA community (Ravenscoft et al., 2012).

Coffee times and lunches held by the CSA farms during volunteer days encouraged face-to-face interactions, which developed an ethic of care between members. David explained that at his farm "*When you go to the marketplace, however many people are there on that Saturday will all congregate to have coffee"* (David, Directive, 2020). The effect of this was reflected on by Rory: *"You tend to be chatting a bit and sharing and then you have some lunch together. These things all build a real connection which can't be done in the same way in a 20-minute talk"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). An ethic of care formed within CSA spaces can develop collective identities and mutually constitutive cultures between CSA members (Lockie and Kitto, 2000).

Where the CSA farms encouraged an ethic of care, welcoming people into the community, members were generally more satisfied with their involvement. Rory acknowledged his "*countless really special connections with both the farmers and the surrounding community"* (Rory, Directive, 2020), and Paula stated "*The farm team are so welcoming, knowledgeable and kind that I always leave the farm feeling really good - if tired! I like the way the team prepare for the volunteers and are always on hand for support and conviviality. It's a privilege to be a volunteer here"* (Paula, Directive, 2020). Hayden and Buck (2012) posit that CSA can promote compassion for others through a sense of community. David recognised that through his CSA farm he was able to *"get to know others and build mutual respect"* (David, Directive, 2020). For others, however, developing relationships took longer. Phillip commented *"For me it took a month I suppose before I felt comfortable going down...and now we just fit in"* (Phillip, Interview, 2020). A range of narratives must be explored, therefore, to account for the heterogeneity of CSA experiences. Attempts to create a welcoming and caring environment, although forming a sense of community for some, did not necessarily do so for others.

4.2.2.2 Place-based Communities and Stewardship

According to Hanrahan and Smith (2020, p.231) the geographies of care are *"contextualised in place and time*". For Schnell (2013), the richness of the connection between humans and place has diminished in recent years. Through place-based communities, members may become attached to their CSA farm (Carolan, 2007), forming deep, caring connections to the space, which may generate a heightened sense of environmental responsibility and care (Penker, 2006). Thus, a sense of caring stewardship may develop towards it. Reflecting on the benefits of CSA, Jack noted "*I think they help connect people to nature and make them think about how natural materials can be used"* (Jack, Directive, 2020). Accordingly, a physical engagement with place can engender durable change in food systems (DeLind, 2003).

The presence of wildlife in CSA farms encouraged interactions between members, nonhumans and landscapes. Narratives of reconnection suggest that this can promote a greater sense of care towards others. However, Pitt (2017) argues that the presence of nonhumans in everyday life renders this null. It was evident that some members cared deeply for wildlife prior to their membership, Rory reflecting *"My heart says that biodiversity loss is the most terrible crime"* (Rory, Directive, 2020). The encounters with nonhumans and wildlife in CSA farms were active and thoughtful, paired with education regarding the importance of environmental sustainability. Combined, this produced a sense of caring stewardship. During the participant observation, it was noted that Applewood Farm had "*given young people a chance to learn about the importance of taking care of animals"* (Participant Observation, 2020). West et al. (2018) posit that this is formed through care, knowledge, and agency.

Instances of shared corporeality with nature enabled deeper understandings of human impact on the environment (Hayden and Buck, 2012). Enchanting, visceral experiences with nonhumans (Figure 6) at the CSA farms created strong memories, and revealed the capacity for nonhumans, and landscapes to affect members (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Zachary described one such experience, stating, "*The bees, the buzz, I've never seen so many bees in one place in my life and just the noise of it*" (Zachary, Directive, 2020). Human conceptions of the natural world form through processual, intersubjective understandings (Crouch, 2003). Therefore, care is tied to embodied experiences of the world (Cox et al., 2008). Through this, members may develop a caring stewardship towards nonhumans and landscapes.

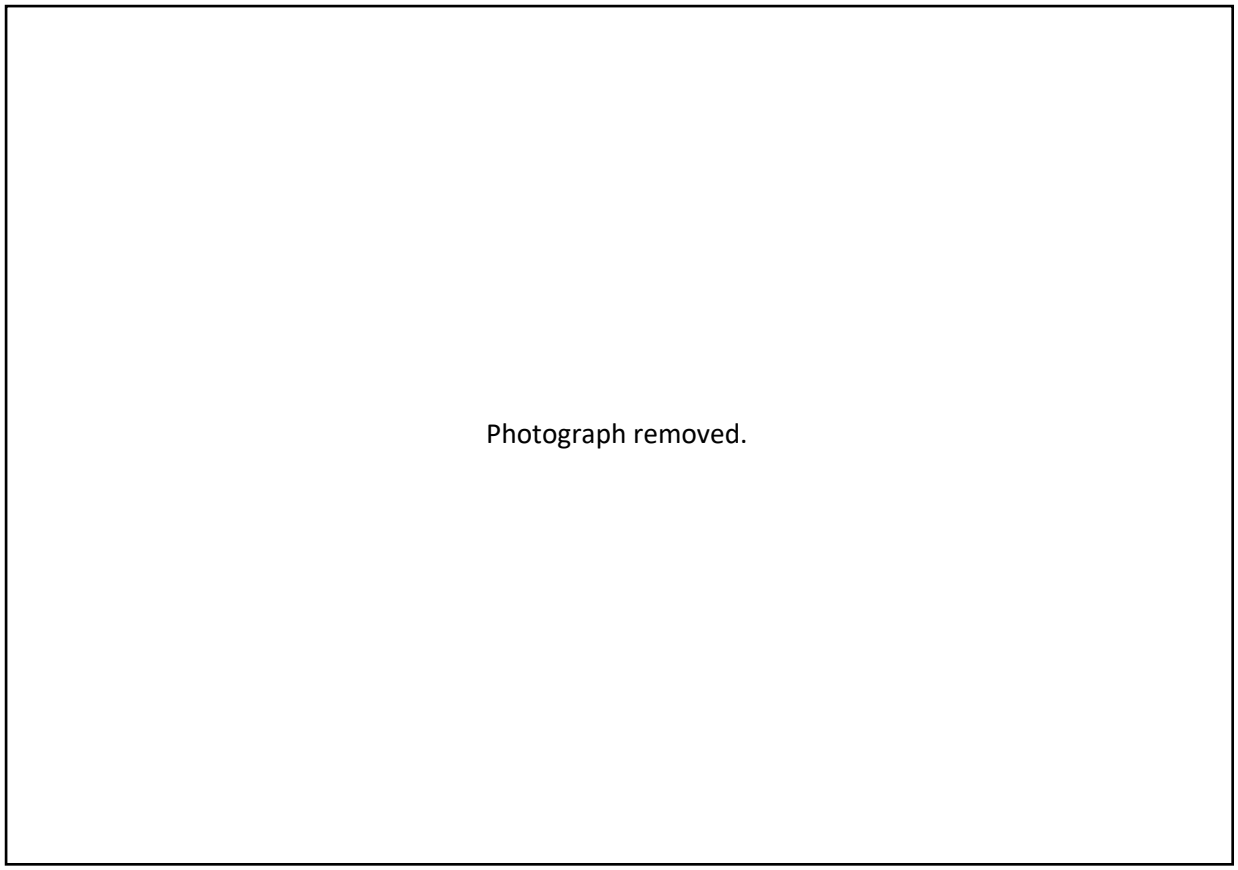

Figure 6: Newt found during volunteering (Participant Observation, 2020).

Where CSA farms created spaces for both wildlife and farming, comprehensions of the importance of sustainability in agricultural spaces formed, moving beyond the perceived divisions between nature and culture (Maxey, 2007). Rory reflected that *"People seem to have a paradigm where land is either land for wildlife or land for farming, and we try to farm in a way that echoes the wild environment"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). According to Tolia-Kelly (2013), humans must acknowledge that they share the world with other beings. The CSA farms actively promoted values of cohabitation and stewardship which influenced members. Elaine explained *"it's about living and working and 'being' in ways that are in harmony with the living systems of which we are a part"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). David defined sustainability as *"living collectively in a way which maintains a balance whereby both humanity and the natural world can flourish"* (David, Directive, 2020). In this way, members exhibited feelings of caring stewardship, developed by the CSA farms.

It is essential to account for negotiations of power when considering caring stewardship towards nonhumans and landscapes. Pitt (2017) questions who benefits from relationships of caring stewardship, those caring (in this case humans), or those cared for (nonhumans and the landscape). Indeed, the boundaries between care and responsibility have become complicated. Valerie considered sustainability anthropocentrically as *"being able to provide for ourselves over a long period of time,*

without depleting our resources" (Valerie, Directive, 2020). Ultimately, humans benefit from caring for, and stewarding the environment. Caring stewardship is often directed towards those who *"contribute to the community*" (Pitt, 2017, p.16). This was evident through the acceptance only of those nonhumans considered anthropocentrically useful to the CSA farms. The participant observation activity *"focussed on getting rid of weeds"* (Participant Observation, 2020). The term 'weed' is fundamentally anthropocentric, indicating a species of plant obstructing human activities. Direct encounters with nonhumans do not necessarily promote ethical regard towards them (Pitt, 2017). Rory accepted *"there are some conflicts, you know, we don't want too many foxes on the land"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). The farm was unwilling to compromise one nonhuman by creating spaces for others perceived as less useful.

4.2.2.3 Like-Minded Communities for Sustainable Values

The caring relationships constituting CSA communities interact and overlap to form sustainable values in CSA members. Members' place-based ethics of care often refocussed each other's environmental concerns (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002, cited in Carolan, 2007), encouraging those with similar values. By engaging with like-minded others, CSA members found that they felt more caring stewardship. Gus had joined after "*wanting to work in the fresh air with an organisation I believed held the same values as I do"* (Gus, Directive, 2020). For Natalie, *"[Oaklands Farm] offer[ed] companionship with like-minded people all working together"* (Natalie, Directive, 2020). According to McEwan and Goodman (2010), care must be collective to make a difference; therefore, community resilience is key to future food system sustainability. Lucy explained:

"*Developing community resilience in the face of climate change seems a priority for us all. Power, water and food all need to be developed to produce locally ... I'm deeply concerned about the state of nature and the huge risks to all life on Earth now in the global south and here in UK now and increasingly in the near future. I would like my family and community to have greater food security in the face of soil degradation, loss of pollinators and harvest failures from extreme weather events. We all need to reconnect with nature and develop skills in sustainable food production and nature enhancement*" (Lucy, Directive, 2020).

According to Haney et al. (2015), feelings of belonging can form through place-based communities. Working together face-to-face, CSA members developed a sense of regard for one another (Hinrichs, 2003) (Figure 7). An ethic of care can arise through physical activity; in Ferntree Farm, members worked in teams with whom they forged stronger connections. Amelia noted *"I've got to know my team and the members well and just become more involved in the community"* (Amelia, Directive, 2020). Valerie explained, *"I have developed strong relationships with others in the*

project and they are all now personal friends" (Valerie, Directive, 2020). This aligned with Jarosz's (2011) understanding of how community identities form through CSA, articulated through practices occurring in the space.

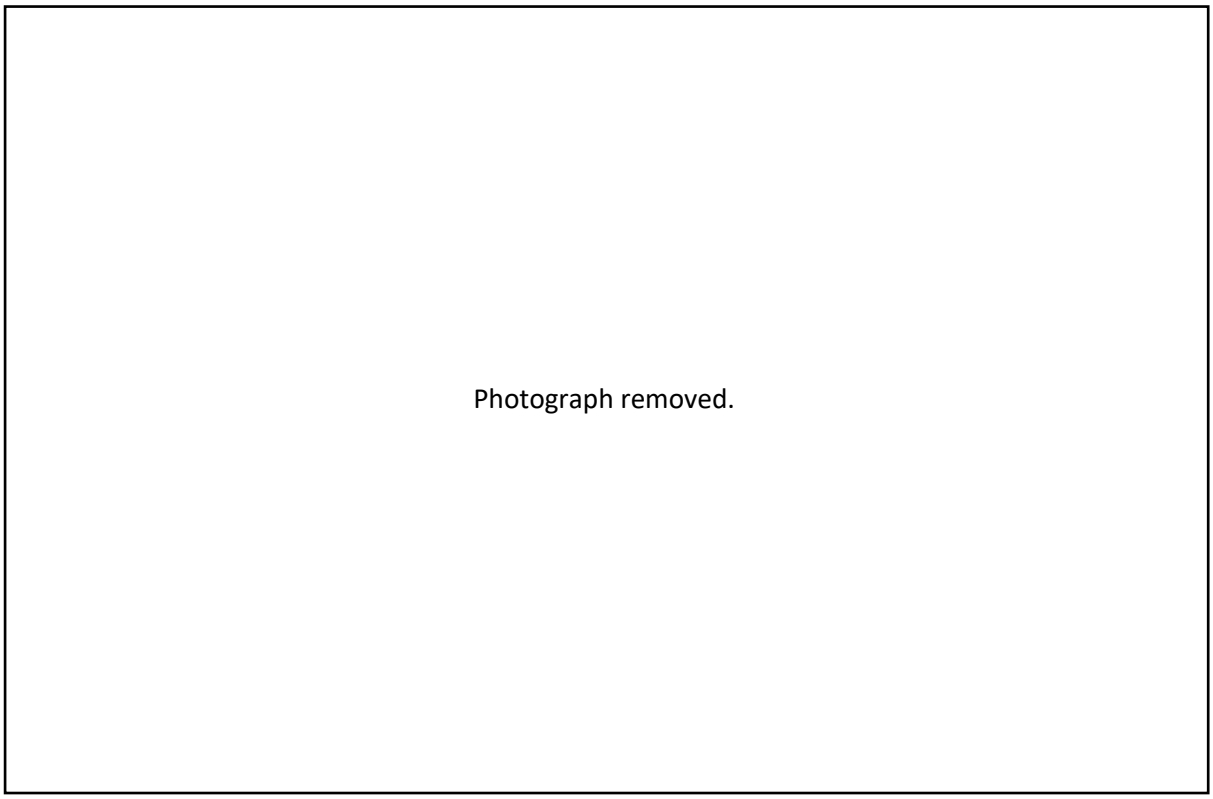

Figure 7: Members volunteering together (Amelia, Directive, 2020).

Equally, it was evident that in some cases a similar mindset of sustainable values and caring stewardship formed an ethic of care. Robert commented "*Having been a veg box customer for years, and having some time on my hands I wanted to find out more about where the boxes that arrive on my doorstep every couple of weeks come from"* (Robert, Directive, 2020). According to Ostrom (2007), by 'putting a face to products', CSA farms enable trusting relationships. Mutual relations of trust have previously been shown to engender caring relationships between CSA members (McDowell, 2004, cited in Popke, 2006; Lamine et al., 2012). Thus, the varied caring practices in CSA farms nurtured like-minded communities.

4.2.2.4 Caring Relationships Beyond CSA Farms

Ravenscroft et al. (2012) argue that communities have become abstracted from their local structures and contexts. However, this research revealed that the situational contexts of CSA farms were pivotal to forming place-based communities. Although some had joined to be part of the community, many had pre-existing relationships with current members. Amelia explained *"I recently recruited two of my neighbours to join*" (Amelia, Interview, 2020). Indeed, many CSA farms had built on existing

communities in the geographical localities. Valerie discussed that it was *"nice to know a group of people already in the town"* (Valerie, Directive, 2020). In reworking pre-existing community relationships, the CSA farms connected members through an ethic of care which extended beyond the place-based farm relationships. Groups such as "*the community choir"* (Valerie, Directive, 2020) exemplified this. Consequently, the CSA farms connected with a wider range of individuals, and in turn, these groups engaged more with sustainable agriculture, generating reciprocal, and durable caring communities.

However, some CSA farms had scope for further community engagement. Julian noted "*I think it's a shame that … [the] team aren't more involved in the local area and what's going on...I may be wrong but what contact do they have with the surrounding area?"* (Julian, Directive, 2020). Elaine discussed *"The time is ripe (in some ways) for [Oaklands Farm] to connect with other active groups in the town to make some of these things happen"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). Therefore, wider community engagement was crucial to the farms' objectives. According to Elaine, considering *"How [she could] relate to the community of [Oaklands Farm] more"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020) was central to her contribution to food system sustainability. She added *"I've joined up with 3 others to explore what it could mean for [Oaklands Farm] to play a larger part in the local food network"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). Evidently, community outreach was perceived as central to the durability of CSA farms.

4.2.2.5 Accessibility and Inclusivity

Previous studies have identified that ensuring accessibility to CSA farms is a considerable issue (Ostrom, 2007). Caring relationships at the CSA farms manifested in a desire to promote equality. Robert reflected "*I think in the current environmental, economic and political climate it's important to work towards an equitable and sustainable future for all"* (Robert, Directive, 2020). An ethic of care fostered through CSA farms can bridge the societal divides often characterising food systems (Lang, 2010). Lang's (2010) concept of 'sweat equity' posits that people may be brought together in equal capacity through physical activity. Zachary evidenced this, stating *"People with degrees, you know, it doesn't matter, you're still shovelling woodchip to mulch things, you know, it's a great leveller"* (Zachary, Directive, 2020). CSA farms can, therefore, challenge unequal power relations between members of food systems. Members of Baxters Hill Farm suggested incorporating activities which worked with groups who had specific needs such as "*Projects with groups such as refugee or asylum seeker community*" or "*young offenders"* (Joy, Directive, 2020). This demonstrated a desire to extend an ethic of care to others outside the farms. These projects are central to enabling CSA farms to tackle social challenges in communities.

It was evident, however, that some CSA farms had room for better accessibility. Paula commented "*I'd like more people to have access to healthy, nutritious food they can afford"* (Paula, Directive, 2020). Zepeda and Li (2006) find that economic demographics are not indicative of food buying behaviours. However, the produce at some of the CSA farms was more expensive, being value-added (owing to greater production efforts). This could prove exclusionary to some low-income groups. Thus, there are trade-offs between economic and social sustainability, which can bring about tensions should one be championed over the other (Forssell and Lankoski, 2015). This further emphasises the need to examine the two simultaneously. For Nathan, physical accessibility was a challenge, remarking "*We've never been to an event because we don't have a car and find it difficult to get to you*!" (Nathan, Directive, 2020). This echoed Zepeda and Leviten-Reid's (2014) findings of the potentially exclusionary nature of remote farms or collection locations.

A lack of racial diversity in the interviewed participants (all of whom were white individuals) echoed calls for CSA farms to make themselves more accessible to diverse communities. Although this sample was not representative of the whole, it highlighted the lack of racial diversity in CSA farms. Stoney Valley Farm was aware of this, posting *"Dismantling systemic racism is central to our work of creating healthy, just food and farming systems for all"* (Facebook, 2020). Although there was not the scope to explore this topic in more detail in this thesis, it remains a crucial area for extensive future investigation.

Therapeutic caring relationships helped to create accessible and inclusive CSA communities. How CSA farms foster therapeutic caring relationships has been explored widely (e.g. Charles, 2011; Hine et al., 2008). Matthew saw need for CSA farms to create an accessible environment for individuals with specific needs; "*My experience is that that there are limited resources to support adults of working age who suffer with dementia*" (Matthew, Directive, 2020). It was evident that many CSA farms had attempted to become more accessible. Rory noted the activities at Applewood Farm *"aimed at people who aren't able bodied"*, adding *"we are trying to build a program of event which provide points of entry for as many different people as possible"* (Rory, Directive, 2020). It is essential to account for varied visceral reactions to food and its production, recognising the heterogeneity of physical experiences at CSA farms (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Zachary recalled an instance when a CSA member had made a concerted effort to communicate inclusively: "*This German guy just suddenly started signing to them, he realized that they were deaf and he signed language, so they had this conversation in the middle of the field in sign language"* (Zachary, Directive, 2020). This illustrates how, contrary to some readings (Ostrom, 2007), certain CSA farms had attempted to improve accessibility and inclusivity.

4.2.2.6 Care, Health and Wellbeing

Therapeutic caring practice extends to CSA members with both physical and mental health disorders. Baxters Hill Farm promoted mental health awareness through Facebook: "*Verbalising our feelings helps us to better know ourselves and to recognise when we're struggling. By sharing these reflections with others, they can also recognise when we might benefit from some additional support"* (Facebook, 2020). Care, health and wellbeing reveal an intersection between the multiple forms of caring that constitute CSA communities. An ethic of care, therapeutic care, and a sense of caring stewarding can interact to improve health and wellbeing through CSA.

The physical activity involved with volunteering gave members a sense of accomplishment, connecting feelings of wellbeing with the natural world. Natalie described that *"There is something so rewarding and therapeutic about working on the land with the soil and seeing what you have planted grow, and then harvesting it"* (Natalie, Interview, 2020). An intersection between a sense of caring stewardship, and therapeutic caring was evident in Zachary's account of *"going around a field with a brown paper bag picking off chamomile flowers and collecting it all morning"*, whereby he considered "*it was quite therapeutic"* (Zachary, Directive, 2020). This aligned with Conradson's (2005) idea that affective relationships with other actors (human, nonhuman and landscapes), can form a greater conception of the self, encouraging members to better care for themselves. Thus, the multiple interactions between the caring relationships present in CSA farms were evident. The farms were an essential wellbeing refuge for some members. During the participant observation, one volunteer said that "*they were taking some time out...because they really wanted to get outdoors"* (Participant Observation, 2020). Jack explained the effect of Baxters Hill Farm on wellbeing:

*"[I am] very pleased that you recognize and celebrate the link between growing and well-being in the activities you put on. The farm site is a wildlife haven too and I feel that anything that helps people feel more connected and responsible for the natural environment is positive, particularly in these challenging time*s" (Jack, Directive, 2020).

Many CSA participants had experienced improved mental health during their involvement. Christine remarked, "*It's been a very important thing for people during COVID, a lot of people have found peace and tranquillity at the farm at a time where it's been difficult in other parts of their lives, so it's been very important in terms of wellbeing"* (Christine, Interview, 2020). The survey conducted by Baxters Hill Farm revealed that, 26% of survey respondents strongly agreed, 32% agreed, and none disagreed that the farm positively affected their mental wellbeing (Figure 8) demonstrating the overarching perceived benefits from CSA involvement. Still, 31 out of 48 surveyed respondents saw scope for more projects which could improve member's mental wellbeing, highlighting areas for improvement.

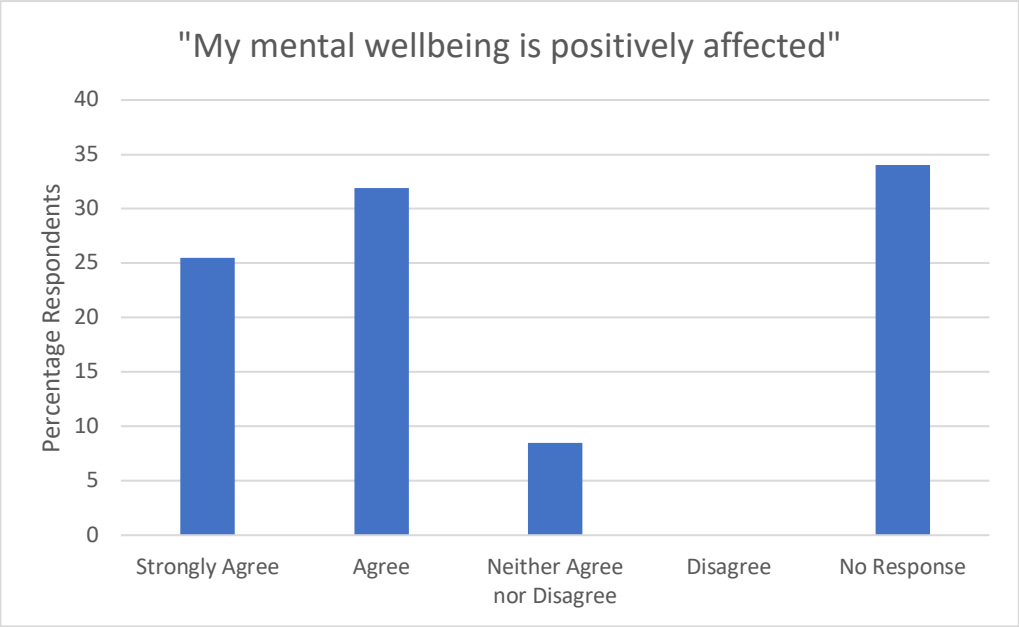

Figure 8: Figure showing the distribution of responses to the statement "My mental wellbeing is positively affected".

4.2.3 Norms, Dynamics and Challenges to Caring in CSA farms

The extent to which the multiple and varied caring relationships developed into communities was evident in the norms and dynamics of the different CSA farms. According to Atkinson et al. (2011) care is fundamentally layered with power relations. Unspoken norms and dynamics ensured co-operation, and therefore, a caring environment. Amelia reflected *"If you are standing there at 5 minutes to and trying to grab the first lettuce, that's not very collaborative and you will probably get a few frowns"* (Amelia, Directive, 2020). These dynamics thereby partially facilitated the durability of an ethic of care.

Although members cited many benefits of CSA communities, they also indicated some difficulties. Rory commented *"There are a lot of people here who care very deeply about what they are doing"* (Rory, Interview, 2020), which created challenges. He acknowledged that the *"depth of feeling can be very considerable and that can create tensions"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). The presence of community does not necessarily imply caring relationships. This was experienced by Gus who stated, "*The bullying and dismissal of problems by staff and trustees affected my mental wellbeing"* (Gus, Directive, 2020). Where an ethic of care constituted a sense of community, the power relations present could have potentially adverse effects. However, this experience was in the minority of responses. Nevertheless, Baxters Hill Farm attempted to remedy this, holding meetings which allowed members to *"air anything that [was] irking [them] and [they] all contribute to a solution which will ease the problem."* (Facebook, 2020). Honest relationships were, therefore, essential to maintaining positive communities through caring environments. Phillip noted that when he arrived "*people were in groups, in cli...not in cliques but they knew each other quite well"* (Phillip, Interview, 2020). This

highlights the potential for the exclusion of joining members from the farm communities due to their 'outsider' status. Hayden and Buck (2012) read that these experiences can be negative, potentially disincentivising members from participating. However, considering these experiences as polarised, as either positive or negative, homogenises the rich, layered encounters occurring within volunteering.

According to Natalie, the responsibility of maintaining CSA communities can fall on few members during challenging times. She commented that the *"core members have remained to carry it through good times and bad"* (Natalie, Interview, 2020). Valerie, from the same farm, also admitted that *"People join full of enthusiasm, put in a lot of effort in a short time, then tend to disappear"* (Valerie, Directive, 2020). This reiterated the need to engender long-standing commitments and behavioural changes in members to prevent this. Some members did not prioritise forming relationships with others. Rory explained *"We have some people who work here who don't forge that strong connections with the farm…it's really important to be comfortable with that diversity"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). It was vital that the CSA farms catered for these differing attitudes and needs. Although CSA communities can be beneficial, there can also be shortcomings of this. The following section outlines an instance which challenged CSA communities.

4.2.4 Care Online During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic forced some farms to close to the public, to "*focus [their] resources on basic food supply"* (Applewood Farm, Facebook, 2020), jeopardising the tight-knit farm communities. Stoney Valley Farm posted "*This is a difficult decision as it is a crucial time for food growers and farmers to keep producing food"* (Facebook, 2020). According to Wells and Gradwell (2001), relationships of care are affective, embodied and as such, situational. However, during the pandemic, face-to-face interactions could not reinforce a sense of community in CSA farms.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed reciprocity in the relationships between all CSA members (Gorman, 2017). The farms expressed gratitude towards their workers: one post by Stoney Valley Farm noted *"There has been a fantastic response to our call-out for volunteers…. It's really lovely to feel the strengthening of support between members during this time of uncertainty"* (Facebook, 2020). Furthermore, letters left by CSA members for delivery drivers demonstrated the community support. One post by Baxters Hill Farm read *"The sweetest note left for one of our drivers this week – it's been hung up in our warehouse and has really boosted morale so a huge THANK YOU to the artist who created it we are truly grateful"* (Facebook, 2020). This revealed how a sense of community can justify CSA farms to continue their endeavours.

During the beginning of the pandemic, the CSA farms used social media to encourage members to support the wider community. Stoney Valley Farm posted "*now is a good time to knock*

on a few doors and find out who your neighbours are. Someone may be in need and we all need to look out for one another." (Facebook 2020). Promoting charity appeals, the farms revealed how situational caring relationships could extend beyond their geographical boundaries. Wychdale Farm posted a "FOOD BANK APPEAL" to which there was a sizeable response, the farm noting that *"one post raised over £500 for the initiative"* (Facebook, 2020). This highlighted the caring community response during challenging times.

According to Holloway (2002), the internet can overcome spatial boundaries, and forge relationships between people. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online engagements substituted place-based CSA relationships, not being bound geographically (Kitchin, 1998). Messages of support on Facebook reaffirmed relationships between community members. This was exemplified by posts stating *"Thank you for supporting us and bearing with us if we get things wrong. Take care everyone xx"* (Wychdale Farm, Facebook, 2020), and "*Please keep checking in with us"* (Applewood Farm, Facebook, 2020). Pole and Gray's, (2013) consideration that spatial proximity no longer defines communities was evident here. However, Bos and Owen (2016) argue that these online communications cannot substitute socio-material connections formed during the material and tactile interactions of volunteering. Thus, it is vital to recognise that moving these contextual relationships online can alter them into different relationships with the CSA farm.

4.2.5 Summary

Caring communities are fundamental to CSA farms, tackling issues such as social isolation, bringing people together to form strong food networks. This section has explored how communities can develop through different caring practices enabling members to form greater commitments to their CSA farm. This was evident in the farm's efforts to create welcoming environments through an ethic of care which also fostered a sense of caring stewardship towards nonhumans and landscapes. However, these stewarding caring relationships did lead to problematic relations of power, largely benefitting humans. Nevertheless, bringing together like-minded individuals through CSA caring relationships did help members to develop sustainable values. This section found that these caring relationships extended beyond the CSA farms, encouraging participation in those in the wider area. Although the farms had made efforts to become more accessible by involving more formalised therapeutic caring practices, there was room for improvement to include those with restricted mobility, and a more racially diverse community. Many of the CSA farms had attempted to promote greater mental health and wellbeing in their communities. Norms and dynamics present in CSA farms highlighted the challenges of tight knit communities which could render CSA food provisioning exclusionary to those who did not wish to participate in the community activities. Conversely, the

necessity of caring community was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, where they were essential for maintaining connections between members.

4.3 Forging New Connections with Food: Changing Consumption Practices

The CSA farms encouraged members to forge different relationships with food through which deeper considerations of sustainability can emerge, translating into daily routines to varying extents. This section first investigates how, through active education on food and sustainability, members may consider their relationship with food differently. It looks at how a greater familiarity with food throughout its lifecycle may encourage deeper embodied and material connections with it, thereby increasing understandings of the necessity for food system sustainability. It then examines how experiences of seasonality and temporality, and thereby negotiating abundance and scarcity may change members' relationships with food. The section then explores how these experiences influence how quality and the value of produce are considered, with reference to the 'quality turn' of the early 2000s. Finally, it examines the extent to which these changing relationships influence CSA members' purchasing habits.

4.3.1 Educating Members on the Relationship between Food and Sustainability

The CSA farms actively encouraged members to develop new relationships with food through educational initiatives. Rory detailed "*we run food workshops…butchery workshops…farm walks with a talk by the farmer"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). Applewood Farm aimed to "*help everybody who works [there] to gain some knowledge of the farm"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). At a basic level this allowed most members to build knowledge of sustainability in relation to food. The effect of this was evident in Natalie's responses, being aware of how her dietary choices impacted the environment: *"I believe it is vitally important to grow one's own food wherever and whenever possible for the sake of one's own health and that of the planet, to eat seasonally and to show children how it is done"* (Natalie, Interview, 2020). Angela believed that "*a greater connection with nature, farming and community is needed to mitigate climate change and to evolve society to adapt to the need for a sustainable future"* (Angela, Directive, 2020). Her knowledge of food system sustainability was embedded in an agricultural context, implying that it had been learnt through her CSA farm.

Russel and Zepeda (2007) consider that although CSA members may be predisposed to a healthy diet and care for the environment, CSA farms may produce longstanding changes to their members' relationships with food. Zachary's awareness of sustainability issues had developed throughout his involvement. He recalled a *"growing awareness of the damage that farming is doing to the planet"* so "*became sort of vegan-ish"* (Zachary, Directive, 2020). Rory discussed how his

mindset had evolved during his membership; Applewood Farm had *"completely transformed [his] understanding of what constitutes good, sustainable food"* and his "*perceptions [had] gradually changed"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). This exhibited Cox et al.'s (2008) 'graduation effect', whereby sustained CSA farm engagement helps to change members' attitudes and beliefs. Elaine's views had also changed considerably. She explained "*Belonging to [Oaklands Farm] has increased my awareness of sustainability a great deal"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). This demonstrates the capacity for CSA farms to bring about individual change. Nevertheless, the diversity of responses indicated that individual responses may not translate to broader populations, being contextually dependent on the specific CSA farm.

4.3.2 From Seed to Table: Forging New Relationships with Food

Goodman (2016) highlights the multiple, liminal and dynamic characteristics of food. The material and visceral connections between humans and food change from 'Soil to Supper' (Figure 9). This was discussed by David, who saw that "*Picking food yourself makes you think about it differently and means that there is more of a complete story behind it when you eat it"* (David, Directive, 2020). The interviewees viewed an altered connection with food positively. Christine noted "*Well you've seen things grow which is really exciting I think"* (Christine, Interview, 2020). Experiences of enchantment in CSA farms can intensify members' embodied relationships with food, being most effective when translated into everyday practices (Herman, 2015). Amelia remarked "*I seeded, harvested, looked after and picked this and now it's in my kitchen, which is really lovely*" (Amelia, Interview, 2020). Thus, members may better acknowledge food's capacity to affect them at each stage of its lifecycle, deepening their comprehension of the importance of food system sustainability.

Through recognising their changing material connections with food throughout its lifecycle, participants saw the connection between food and agriculture when purchasing produce. Direct, sensory encounters with agriculture helped members to connect their food with its origins, understanding where it comes from. Rory explained that on visit days *"most of [the public] look at the lambs and say 'ahhhh' and then go and have a burger"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). The effect of this was recounted during the participant observation, whereby an initial description of the farm detailed "*the smell of manure mingled with the warm smells of cooking"* (Participant Observation, 2020). The direct connections between the sensory experiences of producing, and eating food, helped to forge new understandings of the relationship between food and agriculture.

Eating can viscerally remind individuals of the position that they occupy in the world (Probyn, 2000). This was encouraged by the CSA farms: during meals on the farms, members ate produce that they had harvested, highlighting their varied embodied relationships with food. In one Facebook post,

Baxters Hill Farm stated *"We always pick all the veg and herbs to top the pizza from our Learning Area and forage for leaves for a side salad. There's something incredibly special about picking such delicious and nourishing food straight from nature"* (Facebook, 2020). The use of the phrase 'there is something incredibly special about' illustrates the material and visceral engagements which can affect individuals in a deeper, more intimate way. Furthermore, through these events, food bridged divided perceptions of nature and culture (Mol, 2008), bringing together the separated spheres of eating, and growing food.

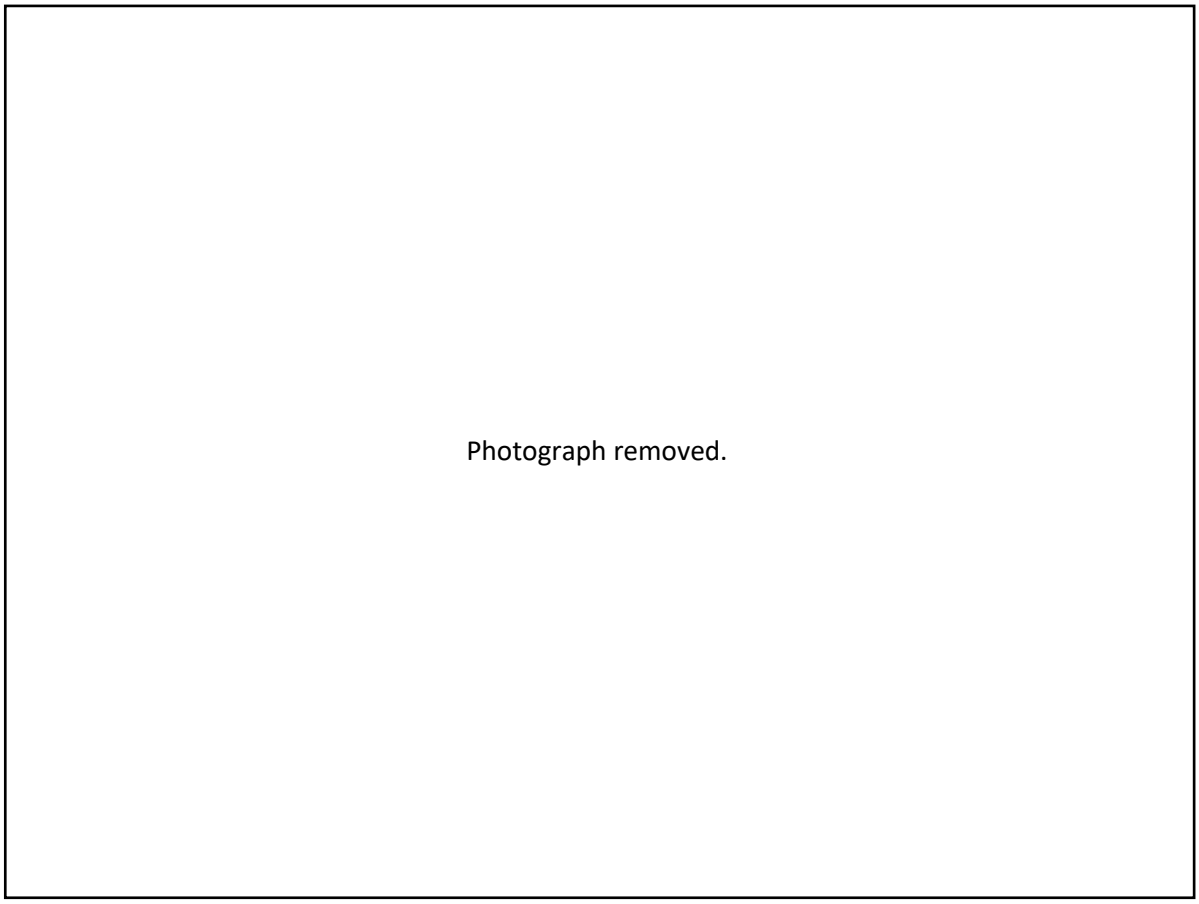

Figure 9: Drawing in Veg Shed (Participant Observation).

4.3.2.1 Seasonality and Temporality

The CSA farms helped many participants to develop deeper understandings of the seasonal and temporal nature of food production, previously lost to a reliance on supermarket produce. Amelia commented "*you can buy raspberries in the middle of, at the opposite season and you can get something from the southern hemisphere"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). This converged with Colquhoun and Lyon's (2001) idea that seasonal knowledge has been diminished by the availability of year-round supermarket produce. The CSA members largely ate seasonally. Amelia considered "*for the last 2 years I have only eaten what's at the farm, it's meant it's incredibly seasonal"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). Robert acknowledged his increased recognition of food's temporality, noting "*It's also made me take*

note much more of the passing seasons, whereas in everyday life these things can rush past us" (Robert, Directive, 2020). The members' lived, corporeal experiences at the CSA farms allowed them to experience food and agriculture as inherently cyclical.

Cone and Myrhe (2000) point out that a stronger relationship with place can produce rich, lived experiences of seasonality. Many of the CSA members recounted such instances. Zachary noted "*it's quite exciting when you kind of see something is ready to be eaten, especially the first time it comes ready, you probably pick it a bit too early"* (Zachary, Directive, 2020). Furthermore, Amelia demonstrated the rich experiences that can arise from consuming seasonal CSA produce, stating "*you generally get a bit excited like 'I haven't had that for a while' that's amazing*" (Amelia, Interview, 2020). These experiences were laden with strong emotions, such as anticipation and excitement, contributing to a more layered relationship with food. Rory also exhibited a strong emotional response to CSA produce. When referring to out-of-season food, he reflected that it was "*so disappointing compared with the real thing"* (Rory, Interview, 2020). An embodied recognition of the comparison between out-of-season, and in-season produce can help members to accept food's cyclical nature.

According to Schönhart et al. (2009), deeper understandings of seasonality can help members to acknowledge the need for sustainable agriculture. Amelia affirmed this, commenting that seasonality was a *"really good indication of what it means to eat sustainably and from a local market because if you can't grow it you don't eat it"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). Only having seasonal produce available helped participants recognise the issues associated with eating out-of-season supermarket produce. Herman (2015) argues that instances of enchantment with food are most impactful when realised in the routinised habits of everyday life. Thus, where purchasing seasonal produce became part of a member's routine, instances of enchantment embedded this knowledge in their wider beliefs and practices. This can generate greater recognition of the need for sustainable agriculture.

4.3.2.2 Negotiating Abundance and Scarcity through Uncertainty

Consuming more seasonal produce required CSA members to negotiate the abundance and scarcity that accompanied this. It has become routine (in western society) to do a 'big weekly shop' (Evans, 2018). However, to consume seasonally, it is necessary to adjust to varying volumes of produce at different times. Amelia noted *"we had probably 2500 onions at the farm harvested in one go"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). For her, this was exciting; she explained *"by, what mid-June, we are going to have an abundance of things and the quantity will just be fantastic"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). However, members needed to be flexible to manage this. Zepeda and Leviten-Reid (2004) consider that variation and uncertainty can discourage some individuals from participating. Amelia added to her previous remarks "*we had bowls of onions which would have lasted us for weeks and I had them sitting in my*

living room" (Amelia, Interview, 2020). She had re-negotiated the perceived temporal constraints normalised (in western society) by consuming supermarket produce (Colquhoun and Lyon, 2001). Amelia's experiences challenged normalised practices, forming new sensibilities towards food practices.

CSA farms may not be suitable for those who cannot accommodate uncertainty and variation. In some instances, an abundance of produce incurred wastage, counterintuitive to the farms' sustainable aims. Forssell and Lankoski (2015) criticise AFNs for failing to take up strategies which prevent food waste. Phillip mentioned that "*a lot goes into the store but yeah there is waste"* (Phillip, Interview, 2020). Rather than waste produce, however, systems were used to minimise the volume thrown away. Wychdale Farm used an 'Elf Shelf' system. They posted "*The Elf Shelf is made up of any fruit and veg we can't sell for whatever reason. If something is damaged, slightly on the turn or we simply have too much surplus that won't keep well for the following week*" (Facebook, 2020). At Oaklands Farm there was "*produce as 'for the family only' as opposed to 'fit for the boxes'"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). Regardless, if members cannot adapt to these variations, the sustainability of CSA farms could be called into question. Elaine admitted "*During the summer there can be crops that we don't have the resources to harvest"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). Evans (2011; 2014) explores how waste can transform the ability of food to corporeally affect humans. If food is wasted, the opportunity for members to be affected is reduced. A lack of resources to manage abundance presents challenges to CSA farms; innovation is, therefore, needed to prevent food waste.

Along with periods of abundance came periods of scarcity, defined by the farms as "The Hungry Gap". Wychdale Farm described this as "*the period of the year (usually April-June) where fresh food supplies plummet and finding produce to fill our vegboxes becomes a very tricky weekly challenge*" (Facebook, 2020). During the Hungry Gap, some farms took measures to prevent shortages. At Ferntree Farm "*some things [were] certainly rationed*" (Amelia); Amelia added *"we might be limited to half a kilo of rhubarb"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). Through learning to negotiate these limits, participants could see the environmental issues that can arise from supplying certain produce throughout the year. CSA members can learn about scarcity and hardship in agriculture through corporeal experiences on the farms (Harrison, 2000, cited in Carolan, 2007). Nevertheless, the members did not experience extreme sensations such as hunger as a result. Oaklands Farm posted "*We haven't, so far, been in a situation where inefficiencies in our food production have led to anyone going hungry*" (Facebook, 2020). Zachary remained optimistic through these times, seeing that there was a "*limited selection at the moment, but hopefully it will get better"* (Zachary, Directive, 2020). Thus, the extent to which CSA farms can generate physical understandings of scarcity, and therefore, the need for sustainability, can be questioned.

The cyclical uncertainty of CSA produce meant that members could not rely on the farms for all their food. Elaine explained *"it's too unpredictable for me to be dependent on it as food for the household"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). This could discourage individuals with less free time from joining. Hayden and Buck (2012) emphasise that CSA farms must provide cooking and storage instructions to overcome these potentially exclusionary constraints. For others, this was more of a downside than a constraint, not preventing their involvement. For Phillip *"the downsides [were] that you are not sure what you are going to get but it doesn't matter"* (Phillip, Interview, 2020). Negotiating produce through their natural variations can better acquaint members with food, educating them on the impacts of farming on the environment.

4.3.3 Negotiating Produce Quality

Greater acquaintance with the natural variations of CSA produce can give CSA members differing experiences of produce quality. The 'quality turn' of the early 2000s indicated that food quality was increasingly becoming a factor in consumer decision making. Ideas of quality became progressively conflated with local production networks (Hinrichs, 2003). Although Ilbery and Maye (2005) posit that too much emphasis has been placed on quality, it remains an effective indicator of CSA members' changing relationships with food. Re-negotiating produce changed member's relationships with produce quality through becoming more aware of how it was produced. Carolan (2011) suggests that, through CSA involvement, bodies can become 'tuned' to different notions of quality and freshness. Miele and Murdoch (2000) consider that bodies have become accustomed to standardised supermarket produce: ideas of quality are often compared to this. The CSA members' ideas of food quality aligned with notions of 'perfection' in produce, generated through supermarkets. David viewed CSA produce as being "*generally good quality though often mixed quality compared to the supermarket"* adding "*the taste is usually very good even if the appearance is not always perfect*" (David, Directive, 2020). Phillip, however, complained that "*The tomatoes don't tend to be as good*" (Phillip, Interview, 2020).

Contrary to the literature of the quality turn, which suggests that local produce is often associated with higher quality (Murdoch et al., 2000), but in line with Hvitsand (2016), the CSA members discussed varying experiences of produce quality. Elaine considered "*The produce is sometimes excellent. But not always"* (Elaine, Directive, 2020). For other members, produce had become laden with ideas of quality, which became conflated with greater value. Rory commented that when seasonal produce becomes available, *"it just tastes like heaven, it's amazing*" (Rory, Interview, 2020). Carolan (2011) questions whether CSA produce does taste better than supermarket produce. In line with Chen's (2013) study on the perception of value in CSA farms, Amelia realised that she

attributed more value to the produce that she helped to grow. She considered *"There's a real sense of the value of the produce. We might not have as much, or it might be really variable what we get and when we get it, but it's that much more valuable"* (Amelia, Interview, 2020). This perceived additional value may give members the impression of improved taste and quality through their transformed relationships with food. Ideas of quality are constructed, acquiring meaning through the contexts of its production and consumption (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 2000). The variable accounts of produce quality found in this thesis highlight the importance of not conflating CSA produce with ideas of quality (Selfa and Qazi, 2005), as this homogenises the variability in member experiences.

In line with the literature on the quality turn, quality directed how CSA produce was marketed. Cox et al. (2008) find that strong routes of communication are vital for informing consumers about produce issues. Renting et al. (2003) find a strong link between transparency, and perceptions of produce quality. By acknowledging issues with produce quality, CSA farms can make consumers more trusting and accepting. Discrepancies in produce quality were admitted by the CSA farms. Wychdale Farm announced *"sorry for the super dodgy carrots going out in our vegboxes the week before last!"* (Facebook, 2020). However, some vegetables were not considered acceptable, indicating that the farms still held their produce to certain standards.

4.3.4 Changing Consumption Patterns?

The uncertainty associated with negotiating seasonality and temporality, abundance and scarcity and quality, rendered it challenging for some members to rely solely on CSA produce. Although education on sustainable diets and a changed relationship with food may encourage individuals to purchase CSA produce, in reality, this is not possible for everyone. Schönhart et al. (2009) consider that dietary variety is necessary all year round to maintain a healthy and nutritious diet. Christine noted "*we do tend to buy brightly coloured vegetables* [from the supermarket] *in the wintertime"* (Christine, Interview, 2020). Owing to health concerns, she had to purchase supermarket produce as CSA produce was too unpredictable.

Some members' CSA involvement had changed their relationship with purchasing food. Conscious consumption choices can allow CSA members to resist hegemonic food systems (Ravenscroft et al., 2012). Rory considered *"It has completely changed the way I shop*". He continued "*When we first came to [Applewood Farm], we didn't buy organic food…now I find it quite difficult to buy food which is not certified organic*" (Rory, Interview, 2020). This demonstrated a clear association between his relationship with food and his food shopping habits. The depth and visceral nature of this relationship was evident. Rory added that he *"find[s] buying something that isn't [organic]*

uncomfortable" (Rory, Interview, 2020). Zachary echoed this, considering "*I wouldn't buy from a supermarket anymore if I could help it*" (Zachary, Directive, 2020).

Ilbery and Maye (2005) emphasise the plural reality of food shopping habits, mirrored by the findings of this thesis. Indeed, some member's shopping habits had not changed throughout their involvement. David contemplated "*My shopping habits haven't changed too drastically*" (David, Directive, 2020). Osteen et al. (2012, cited in Peterson et al., 2015) question whether CSA farms do engender conscious consumption choices, or whether members were predisposed to these values. David noted "*most people involved have all they need so this is more of a hobby than making a real difference to the world"* (David, Directive, 2020). Thus, CSA membership can be seen as a luxury, whereby a change in attitudes may be a positive, but notably supplementary outcome. CSA farms must work to become more accessible to those who cannot accommodate these changes, in order to develop their capacity to bring about sustainable values on a broader level.

4.3.5 Summary

This section has explored how CSA farms can encourage members to forge new relationships with food. This was enabled through formal educational strategies and closer sensory encounters with food production which helped to develop member's existing concerns for sustainability. Thus, CSA members better understood concepts like seasonality, highlighting the benefits of purchasing seasonal produce. However, this required members to negotiate the abundance and scarcity accompanying this, proving exclusionary to some who could not accommodate this uncertainty. These new understandings of food production also involved forging new relationships with produce quality. These relationships changed member's consumption habits, and reliance on supermarket produce, to varying extents.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion: Sustainability, Community and New Relationships with Food?

Given the impending challenges to the sustainability of UK food systems, there is a clear need to examine how CSA farms may encourage sustainably conscious attitudes and caring communities. This thesis has questioned:

- How do CSA initiatives relate to participants' concerns surrounding sustainability?
- In what ways do CSA farms rely on elements of the conventional food system?
- What types of care can be seen in CSA farms and how are they expressed?
- In what ways do CSA initiatives bring together farming, purchasing and eating food?

5.1 Becoming Producers

This thesis has explored how, through learning to produce their own food, CSA members may better understand sustainability challenges. This helped to reveal how CSA participation can relate to members' sustainability concerns. Teaching members to produce their own food empowered them, allowing them to realise the daily challenges associated with food production, bridging gaps in epistemic distance (Carolan, 2007). This was largely constituted through embodied, tacit knowledge, where members had formed place-based connections with their farms. This exhibited Carolan's tactile space and affirmed Hayden and Buck's (2012) consideration that CSA membership influences an individual's concerns for the environment. Thus, examining how bodies interact with landscapes can reveal how environmentally conscious attitudes may arise. Examining these processes and practices using ANT proved valuable for showing how connections between food system actors came about through CSA involvement. Embodied experiences, formed through tactile space, allowed members to recognise how, simultaneously, nonhumans could enact agency on them, and they could affect nonhumans and landscapes. Herman (2015) emphasises that enchantment with food is not necessarily positive. This was evident in the participants' experiences whereby their varied place-based encounters contributed to a rich, lived comprehension of CSA (Schnell, 2013). These visceral experiences with food production showed members the challenges of producing food all year round, driving home the need to purchase seasonally available produce.

Recognising the intrinsic interconnections between humans, nonhumans and landscapes, and their capacity to affect one another, showed members the need for sustainable food systems. This was best realised through a combination of volunteering and formal educational events at the CSA farms, which facilitated both non-representational and taught knowledge. It was evident that members had been influenced by this where they defined sustainability through their knowledge of

CSA. However, other members had extensive understandings of a range of sustainability issues, indicating that their interest pre-existed, and extended beyond their CSA involvement. Although the extent to which CSA can form concerns for sustainability issues can be questioned, echoing Vassalos et al. (2017), its role in developing them through Cox et al.'s (2008) graduation effect is affirmed here. Food system knowledge is highly contextual; hence, bringing together members with different backgrounds and experiences promoted innovation in CSA farms. Therefore, opportunities for knowledge exchange and innovation in CSA farms was identified as an area for future investigation.

The background upon which tactile space builds, stems from narratives of disconnection from nature. Echoing Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007), this thesis found flaws in ideas of 'disconnection', many members evidencing a pre-existing interest in the environment and growing their own food. This indicated that it is not a 'reconnection with nature' that reveals the need for sustainability. Instead, this can be encouraged by the different types of learning within CSA farms which form an active and 'minded body' (McWhorter, 1999; cited in Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Looking forward it is important to distinguish between superficial lived experiences and deep thoughtful encounters within CSA farms, and the varying extents to which they may foster sustainable attitudes.

One primary aim of this thesis has been challenging normalized assumptions and binaries present in agri-food literature, through CSA. In learning to produce their own food, CSA members became both producers and consumers. Thus, the polarising labels of producer and consumer are insufficient for examining CSA membership. Members became empowered through 'selling' their food in the CSA farm marketplaces, better recognising their agency in food systems. Furthermore, this facilitated trust and transparency, allowing members to sell or purchase produce with confidence. This addressed the disempowerment produced by hegemonic food systems and revealed their similarities and differences to the various CSA models. Greater departure from mainstream food production was contingent upon members' availability of free time. It was not possible for some to accommodate this into their daily lives, calling into question the scalability of CSA to broader populations. This highlighted that CSA farms must remain flexible to accommodate different members' needs.

The trade-offs between promoting different forms of sustainability is a challenge that will define the durability of CSA farms. This thesis viewed sustainability as multifaceted, acknowledging environmental, social and economic factors (Maxey, 2007). In some CSA farms, produce was cheaper as members committed a certain number of hours to food production. However, this had social trade-offs, often taking up member's free time. Without this, produce was more costly, excluding others economically. Remote purchase locations posed challenges for those without a car, echoing Zepeda

and Leviten-Reid's (2004) findings. This was particularly important for ensuring accessibility for those with limited means through which CSA farms could tackle social issues. Therefore, Lang's (2010) consideration that CSA brings about social change through enabling access to healthy, affordable food can be questioned as where purchase locations are out of the way, access is limited to those with the means and mobility to travel there. Furthermore, a lack of racial diversity in research participants raised questions regarding CSA's social accessibility. Although this thesis did not have the scope to explore this issue, it did identify that all interviewed participants were white individuals. Although this is not representative of the whole, it did highlight the need for further investigation into the 'whiteness' of CSA spaces (Slocum, 2007).

5.2 Caring and Community in CSA

Exploring the different caring practices in CSA farms, and how they interact to form durable and resilient communities, has revealed how CSA can present multifaceted sustainable solutions to food system challenges. Community has been previously seen to motivate individuals to join CSA farms (Lang, 2010), a point affirmed by this thesis. Additionally, a sense of community encouraged deeper commitments, ensuring their continued involvement, and so their CSA farm's durability. Therefore, an initial desire for community, led members to opt for more sustainable food provisioning.

CSA communities arise from multiple interacting and intersecting caring practices. Rather than studying one expression of care in isolation, examining how they overlapped and connected, revealed how CSA communities can form. Three primary (but not exhaustive) types of caring practice were identified, largely aligning with those accepted across the agri-food literature.

A feminist ethic of care was recognised, fostered through a sense of welcome and inclusivity, affirming commitments in those considering joining. Working together to produce food facilitated trusting and caring relationships echoing Fonte's (2008) findings on the development of transparent networks through interpersonal negotiations. This incentivised members to join, and nurtured caring commitments to their CSA farm. This ethic of care is spatially embedded in a CSA farm's situational context (Hinrichs, 2003), forming through interactions with nonhumans and landscapes. However, this thesis found that these relationships extended outside the farms' geographical boundaries to other community groups in the locality. Although they arose from place-based connections to space, they were not confined to it.

This ethic of care formed like-minded communities through which members encouraged each other's sense of caring stewardship towards their CSA farm (West et al., 2018). Therefore, caring stewardship led the CSA farms to create spaces for humans and nonhumans to co-exist, creating a network, and community of beings. In line with Herman's (2017) work, these communities were

inherently situational, co-produced by all inhabiting the space. Thus, each CSA farm community varied, contingent upon their contextual interactions. Through this, members better acknowledged that they share the world with other beings, moving beyond separated perceptions of nature and culture. Pitt (2017) highlights that this is problematic due to the frequency of nonhuman encounters in humans' daily lives (Ginn, 2014). This thesis suggests that the active and mindful encounters arising from tacit and representational CSA learning allow for greater conceptions of co-habitation.

It is essential to account for the challenges to generating caring relationships and communities in CSA farms. Caring relationships are fundamentally laden with power, causing problematic tensions. Recipients of caring stewardship can come to be defined anthropocentrically by whether they "contribute to the community" (Pitt, 2017, p.16). Although caring relationships may constitute CSA communities, the communities themselves were not necessarily caring. Where relationships were particularly close, cliques developed, in some instances causing bullying, revealing CSA communities to be potentially exclusionary. In some cases, this damaged an individual's desire to remain a member. The connection between CSA farming and community also led to them being excluded from purchasing sustainable food. Hence, it was crucial that CSA farms appreciated that community aspects were not desirable to everyone.

The varied caring practices present in CSA farms were fundamentally dynamic, interacting on varying scopes and scales (Dowler et al., 2009), forming diverse communities. The findings of this thesis further emphasised the need to examine these caring practices in conjunction to fully capture caring in CSA farms. This was most evident in the CSA farms' role as therapeutic spaces (Charles, 2011). Therapeutic caring practices were evident the farms' provisioning for members with disabilities. These relationships were co-produced through an ethic of care. Additionally, some farms delivered formal strategies to improve member's mental health and wellbeing. Encouraging caring stewardship and responsibility for nonhumans and landscapes reminded members to care for themselves, vital for improving mental health and wellbeing. Although this has previously been explored in the context of care farms (Hine et al., 2008), the mental health benefits of CSA farms remains an area for future investigation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was evident that maintaining caring practices was essential for member wellbeing. Messages of care online strengthened communities, facilitating caring relationships, tackling the increasing individualism and isolation of modern society (Warde, 1997, cited in Ravenscroft et al., 2012). Although scoping constraints prevented this thesis from exploring this in more depth, the role of CSA in maintaining communities during crises remains an area for future study.

5.3 Changing Relationships with Food

This thesis found that CSA farms encourage their members to form new relationships with food. This was most prominent when both non-representational learning through tactile space (Carolan, 2007), and active education generated new knowledge of food and sustainability. At CSA farms, the spaces of farming, purchasing and eating food overlap, serving both agricultural, and socio-cultural purposes. As food exists on the boundaries of nature and culture (Mol, 2008), it can help to bridge dualistic considerations of agricultural spaces. Social events centred around food, such as pizza lunches following volunteer days, helped CSA members to experience food viscerally through its differing material capacities (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008), but in the same space. Thus, members formed an embodied, corporeal recognition of food from seed to table, as being inherently cyclical and seasonal through its variable abundance and scarcity (Colquhoun and Lyon, 2001). Through this, members better comprehended how purchasing in-season produce could benefit food system sustainability.

Forming and adjusting to differing relationships with food did not necessarily benefit CSA members. The variable abundance and uncertainty of CSA produce proved exclusionary to those unable to accommodate this, echoing Zepeda and Leviten-Reid's (2004) findings. This revealed the complexities of CSA member's reliance on supermarkets, as often the CSA farms could not compete with their convenience. Even if CSA members still purchased supermarket produce for convenience, their increased knowledge of food system sustainability allowed them to make more conscious purchasing decisions. Embodied engagements helped members to understand how their purchasing decisions could affect both the environment, and those producing food. Therefore, the CSA farms challenged the disempowerment of supermarket shoppers, where sustainability issues had previously appeared epistemically distant and abstract.

New relationships forged with food also developed into differing relationships with supermarket produce. Despite an over-emphasis on the subject in previous research (Ilbery and Maye, 2005), notions of quality indicated how these relationships had changed. Varied experiences with CSA produce quality challenged the conflation of locality and quality, highlighted by Selfa and Qazi (2005). This thesis affirmed Ilbery and Maye's (2005) position that quality is embedded in the context of CSA farms, finding that following volunteering, members perceived produce quality as higher. Nevertheless, these notions of quality were still defined in line with ideas of perfection normalised by supermarkets.

Differing relationships with food forged through CSA farms encouraged members to reconsider their food purchasing habits to varying extents (Russell and Zepeda, 2007). This further revealed the complexity of CSA members' relationships with hegemonic food systems. Members

seldom solely purchased CSA produce in practice, echoing Ilbery and Maye's (2005) findings of the plurality of these habits. Some members had health issues which required access to a variety of fruit and vegetables all year round. A diversion from hegemonic purchasing practices need not be as radical as some suggest, as this is not durable, and may discourage members from choosing more sustainable options in the long run (Tregear, 2011). Such discourses can feed exclusionary narratives of CSA, previously seen in the Slow Food Movement (Hayes-Conroy, 2010). These debates should not be confined to binary conceptions of 'alternative' and 'conventional'. In reality, some CSA farms occasionally participated in external market networks, buying produce from larger farms during the Hungry Gap. Thus, this thesis questions the ability of CSA to provide complete alterity from hegemonic food systems, suggesting instead the more maintainable reality (for many members) of purchasing both CSA, and sustainable supermarket produce.

5.4 Methodological Reflections

It is rarely the case that research proceeds without obstacles. The introduction of a nationwide lockdown during 2020 meant that the original methodology including participant observation and face-to-face interviews could not be completed. Although this thesis originally aimed to access ethnographic data to investigate how understandings of sustainability issues could be recognized through volunteering, this was not possible. As a researcher, it is essential to remain flexible in approaching data collection; therefore, adopting the use of directives in place of participant observation ultimately proved valuable. Active CSA members' sensory experiences and memories provided a useful insight into the topic, answering the research questions effectively. This also demonstrated the value of self-conducted directives in accessing experiences of embodied engagements.

5.5 CSA: Looking Forwards

With recent calls to examine sustainable solutions to food system challenges, the scope of this project was carefully defined, owing to the range of interdisciplinary subjects which could have been explored. As such, there were a number of areas which had the potential for future study that could not be explored within this thesis. Although the CSA farms were accessible and inclusive to many, including those with disabilities, they showed a lack of racial diversity. This must be examined in order to ensure future equitable access to healthy and affordable food in the UK. The longstanding conception that such projects are only directed towards white affluent individuals must be challenged. Exploring these barriers is, therefore, imperative.

Whilst conducting this research, the value of CSA farms in improving mental health and promoting healthy lifestyles became evident. Thus, empirical investigations into the extent to which CSA farms have improved their member's mental and physical health would prove valuable. Case studies exploring the impact of COVID-19 on the farm communities revealed growing CSA demand during this time. Future studies in this area would provide a useful insight into how crises affect CSA farms, and how they may contribute to future food system resilience against crises.

This thesis has suggested that pre-assumed labels such as producer and consumer are insufficient for examining the heterogeneity of CSA member experiences. Moving beyond these can encourage durable change in beliefs and mindsets. This thesis has shown that CSA farms may foster skill sharing and innovation. Bringing individuals from different backgrounds together in creative spaces can develop novel ideas for food system sustainability. Finally, this research has highlighted the importance of acknowledging the contextual and situational nature of individual's experiences with various CSA models. Each CSA farm is made up of a diverse network of humans, nonhumans and landscapes, constituting a unique community. Therefore, future research into CSA must not extrapolate and homogenise results found at one farm to the entirety of CSA.

Although CSA is viable and beneficial for small communities, its ability to supply the whole of the UK, and engender large-scale transformative change to societal issues must be subject to further investigation. This thesis finds that CSA can increase an individual's awareness of sustainability issues and thereby nurture existing environmentally conscious attitudes. It can generate a range of caring practices, forming diverse and inclusive communities. Furthermore, CSA plays an important role in helping individuals to forge new relationships with food.

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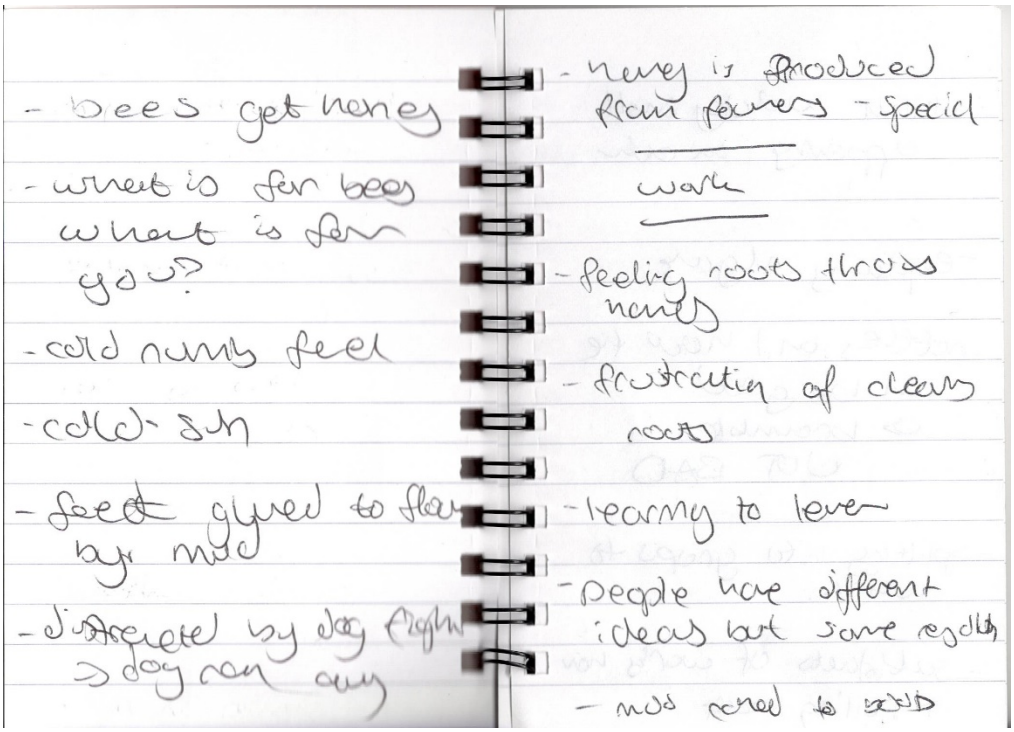
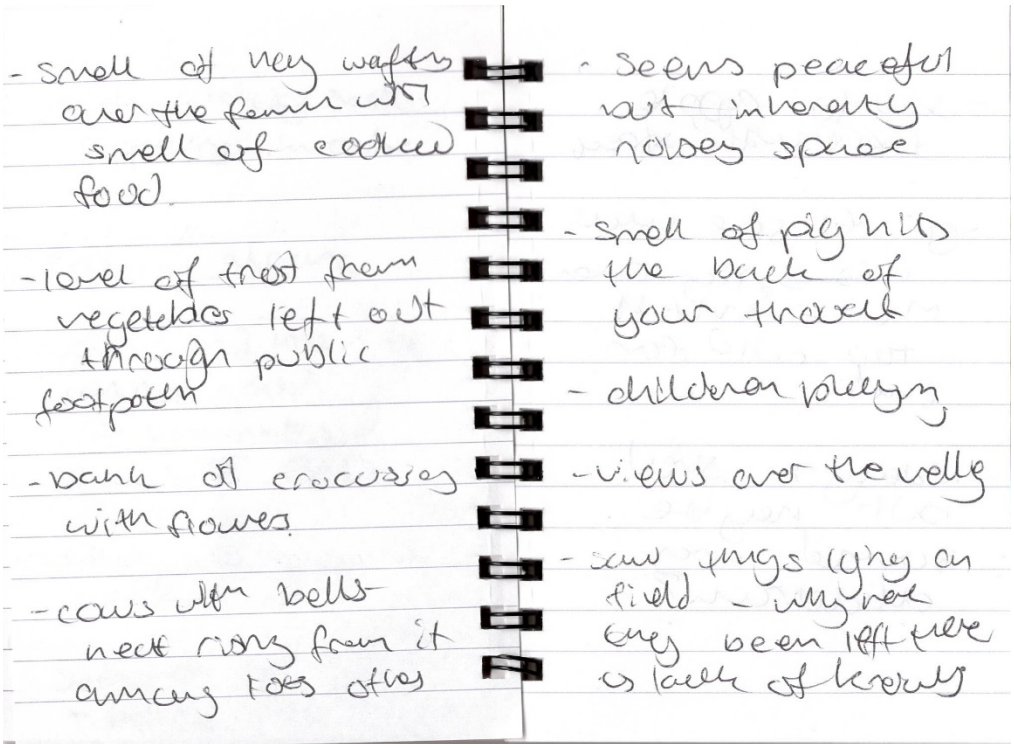
Appendices

Appendix 1: Field Notebook Scan



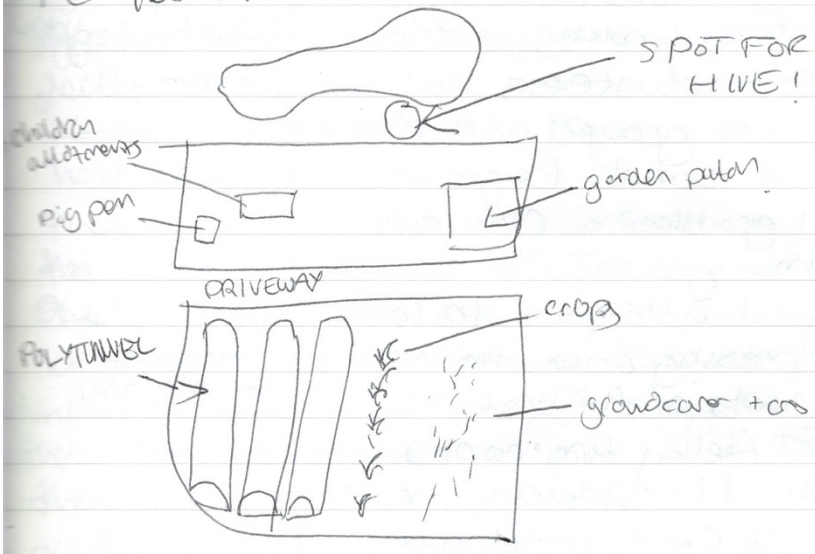


Appendix 2: Aspects considered during the Participant Observation (Mack et al., 2005, p.20)

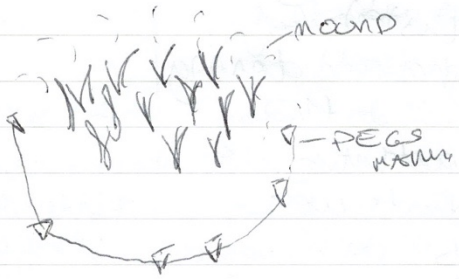
Category	Includes	Researchers should note
Appearance	Clothing, age, gender, physical appearance	Anything that might indicate membership in groups or in subpopulations of interest to the study, such as profession, social status, socioeconomic class, religion, or ethnicity
Verbal behaviour and interactions	Who speaks to whom and for how long, who initiates interaction, languages or dialects spoken, tone of voice	Gender, age, ethnicity, profession
Physical behaviour and gestures	What people do, who does what, who interacts with whom, who is not interacting	How people use their bodies and voices to communicate different emotions, what people's behaviours indicate about their feelings toward one another, their social rank, or their profession
Personal space	How close people stand to one another	What people's preferences concerning personal space suggest about their relationships
Human traffic	How and how many people enter, leave, and spend time at the observation site	Where people enter and exit, how long they stay, who they are (ethnicity, age, gender), whether they are alone or accompanied
People who stand out	Identification of people who receive a lot of attention from others	These people's characteristics, what differentiates them from others, whether people consult them or they approach other people, whether they seem to be strangers or well-known by others present Note that these individuals could be good people to approach for an informal interview or to serve as key informants

Appendix 3: Participant Observation Extended Summary

We were taken to a muddy patch at the bottom of one of the fields, by the hedge.



It was a small patch marked out by a line of pegs and following a small mound



Half of the patch was littered by debris, dead plants, ~~ba~~ brambles and nettles. A big task to clear. Given a variety of tools such as spades, forks and shears I was shocked at the speed at which the volunteers dived in. Many had experience with gardening I knew how to 'weil'

forks and shoes however it struck me how someone who had not done the same would struggle to grasp this. Looking around the different participants had evidently split into groups and started to clear away the scrub. Eager to get stuck in, I grasped a fork and stuck it into the ground. The soil was wet and claggy. I attempted to lever the fork by pressing down the handle to lift up the roots of the bramble I was attacking, feeling the roots give underneath. It struck me how much you could feel underneath the ground using the fork, the network of roots under the soil and the life that lay dormant below ready for spring. This enthusiastic clearing lasted for about half an hour, digging and clearing away. At this point I realised the difficulty in some of the activities. It became easy to learn which plants were easier to dig up. V2 was well versed in plant types and conducted an activity over the uses of the different plants and their characteristics. I found it frustrating how difficult the brambles were to dig out of the ground and went to wrap them around my glove even with my gloves on they loosened the [illegible] the other more woody plants

Working together awareness.

Connects to the soil

relationship between humans → can with similar environment knowledge

Forging environmental knowledge connections

Appendix 4: Interview Template

1. Would you mind telling me a bit about yourself and how you came to be part of this CSA?

Qa. How did you come to be a part of your CSA? How long have you been involved?

Qb. Do you remember your first experience of the farm?

Qc. How has your involvement changed since your first experience? Are you more involved?

Qd. Would you be able to describe a typical day of volunteering at your CSA?

2. What does sustainability mean to you?

Qa. Have your thoughts on sustainability changed since joining your CSA?

Qb. Does the farm have any educational programmes? Please explain more about these.

Qc. Has being involved with your CSA changed your wider approach to sustainability in everyday life?

3. Community Involvement

Qa. What is your experience of working with others in the farm?

Qb. Do you have any involvement with them outside the farm or is your relationships predominantly based around the farm?

Qc. Do you get your food from the farm? Has doing this changed the way that you shop?

Qd. What do you think about the quality and taste of the food produce?

4. Shopping Experiences

Qa. Can you describe for me the experience of going to the pick-up point/ farm shop/ getting your food?

Qb. What do you think are the benefits and shortcomings of getting your food like this?

Qc. Do you notice any similarities or differences between supermarket food and CSA food?

Appendix 5: Interview Transcription

- Start of Transcript -

I: So, would you be able to tell me a bit about how you came to be a part of the group?

P: Okay so umm, this was [redacted]

I: Yes.

P: So I have been interested in sustainability and sustainability issues for a long time, and I've worked in the industry since about 2004, as in industry as it were professionally, so I've always had an interest but I've come into it very much form the academic perspective working within a couple of institutions that focus on education for sustainability and my involvement has always been on the management side, on the communications and marketing and I've loved it and its fantastic to inspire other people to be involved, but I always hankered to do something a little bit more practical within it myself. So, a few years ago I did a residential PDC, a Permaculture Design Certificate which I absolutely loved. I did it in Scotland where I had access to some brilliant community sites and permaculture projects but with a real focus on working in quite challenging environmental conditions and one of them was halfway up the side of a mountain for example *I laughs* so you know they were really tough. And then when I got a job here [redacted], I looked around for a project that I could get involved in practically. Now [redacted] is not a permaculture project, but it was started, as you probably know, from the transition movement here in [redacted], and so it has that peak oil principle I suppose and we farm on organic principles although we are not accredited, so for me it's an ideal combination. And there is an interest in permaculture at the farm, it's just not the overriding, I suppose driving force at the moment. But yeah, that was sort of my journey into getting involved, and so I formerly joined in Autumn 2017. *Okay* and so I've gone through 2 winters and I'm in my second summer.

I: Okay and so how have you found that, the differences between the winters and the summers?

P: *Laughs* Well I started in the Autumn *right* and I was very aware of what I was getting myself into. I mean I've done some, you know I've grown food and things before, my family are quite interested in that although nothing on a large scale. So I did my PDC in the Autumn as well so I was very aware of the reality of the fact that you're going to be walking through a foot of mud for three months *I laughs* and it's going to be freezing cold and after 2 hours outdoors you actually won't be able to feel your fingers *I Laughs* let alone use any tools so I was very aware of that and I have to say it's an interesting time to start and I think it's, It's a time which shows you the true cycle. Because a lot of people I think start in the spring and summer. Its lovely weather, everything is coming to abundance, you know, you've got all that summer crop and its really lovely being outdoors, and yet actually you can only get to that stage when you have done a lot more of the hard slog through the winter. So yeah, for me it was an ideal time, and it allowed me to see the full progression of an annual cycle, because we started with a lot of, umm, the planting of the seedlings, coz we grow everything from seed, umm really in the new year, and so yep it was a perfect introduction.

I: Oh nice, and do you remember your first experience at the farm?

P: The sort of sensory experience?

I: Yep!

P: Umm I do, it felt a long time coming actually because I had tried to get in touch with the farm through their social media for some time, *laughs* and unbeknownst to me they had had a problem with various platforms and so there was just no response, and so in the end I just thought, right, I'm just going to walk along and basically invite myself to the farm and see if I can find someone to talk to. I had clearly been too polite just waiting electronically for a little while *I laughs*. And so, I remember walking up to the farm, I knew roughly where it was because I found it on google maps, and it's on... I don't know if you have actually, you probably haven't had a chance of course with COVID to visit the farm but it's a 2-acre site on a larger, what was a working farm, which is still a working farm but has been apportioned up for lots of different projects. And so, it was a case of sort of, maneuvering through the huge log piles, and the gravel piles, and a couple of peacocks

really strangely *I laughs* umm and, you know avoiding the tractors from a vintage collection, and then eventually getting to the farm. And so, I was sort of thinking 'am I in the right place?', so there was all of that, and yeah, I was met by some really friendly members who just sort of waved and said, we don't know you, are you a new member?' and I said ' well I would love to talk to someone. And yeah, and then I was met and given a tour around and said 'yes I would like to sign up. So, I mean it was very friendly, very welcoming, and those were the overriding impressions. It looked really abundant.... umm I remember thinking ' this looks like a project that is working' if you know what I mean *both laugh* as opposed to one with brilliant ideals but never really gets off the ground. So, it was clear that it was functioning really well *I: yep* everything was incredibly green, umm it was very biodiverse, because you could see that from the surrounding area, umm yeah, really, really pleasant to find that in what is. We are on the edge of [redacted] here, so we are by no means urban, but it's very managed *I: mmm* green belt. And this is, you know, a really lovely farm in what is, you know, I think of as quite an urban area.

I: Yeah. Was there quite a lot of....

P: Its quite skewed because I mean when I think of countryside, I mean proper countryside, *I laughs 'yeah'* it's not proper countryside.

I: Yeah *laughs* And so was there quite a lot of like wildlife, like nonagricultural wildlife round there?

P: You mean apart from the peacocks *I laughs* which I believe live next door, I mean umm, it's not the most obviously biodiverse area of the UK but there are certain things. I mean we have ravens in the area, which were flying around, there are hawks and there are kits, you know there is evidence of wildlife but it's not, you don't see it that easily. I mean I've come across the odd roe deer while walking nearby but that kind of as wild as you see on a daily basis. *I: yep* but within a few weeks of being at the farm I had extracted pheasants out of the netting, and we had, there has been fencing put up to stop the deer coming in so there is definitely wildlife, I just didn't immediately see it when I turned up

I: Okay, yeah, that's really interesting. So, do you think that your involvement with the farm and everything has changed since your first experiences, how has your involvement developed?

P: Okay so one of the virtues, I suppose, [redacted] farm, and I have alluded to this already, is that it's pretty organised, umm it comes from a very established Transition [redacted] project, so it had a very clear set of principles, it has very clear governance, umm so its organised so its organised. So, when you turn up and say I'd like to join, it's incredibly welcoming but it's made very clear what the expectations are, and if I'm honest I think that's what makes it function so well, so everybody who would like to join is welcome. There are no requirements made for anyone to have any experience, umm or an expertise in anyway which is great for me because I had a little bit but not that much. Umm but you are required to commit to at least 10 hours of work a month *I: okay* and that is a very clear expectation. I mean of courses there are situations where some people can't quite do that for one reason or another, but it's made really clear that you shouldn't be signing up if you can't do that because that's a community expectation and its shared. So, I pretty much do a Saturday morning's shift on a weekly basis. My team generally arrives between about 9.30 and 10 in the morning and we stay till. about 12.30 or 1 in the afternoon. So, there's generally, we are doing about 12-13 hours a month on a regular basis and then of course during the summer there are watering rotas and in the winter there may be some extra activities like digging in manure or something like that and so you know, I would say that if been a pretty consistent commitment, if that's what your question is referring to, umm but it's definitely changed in other ways. Umm obviously I've got to know my team and the members well and just become more involved in the community

I: And so, are there different teams on the farm? How does that work?

P: Yeah, I don't know how much background if any you were given but I presume you spoke to [redacted], is that right?

I: Yes, briefly and I sort of grasped some things from the website.

P: So, we've got just under 2 acres, that's the size of the site, and it is split up into 20, quite formal plots which are, I suppose a quarter of the size of what was standard allotment, umm so 20 plots and 10 teams each with a responsibility for 2 plots *right* So I belong to plot [redacted] we are at the end of the farm space and we have responsibility for those 2 plots. But in addition, there is a fruit team, umm, who look after all the fruit trees, we have quite a few plums, and apples, and pears, we have actually quite well-developed orchard if I'm honest, and then there are various other umm teams, there's a team of rovers, who are often new members who can rove around and help wherever it is needed, there's people who take responsibility for maintenance. And then we have shifts where, as a team we take responsibility for either cleaning the composting loos or the compost systems itself and things like that. So, it's on a team basis and generally someone joins a team and generally stays with that team. And it's the crops that rotate not the people.

I: Okay, that's really interesting.

P: I have to say it's all very organized, somebody really planned it out (laughs).

I: * laughs* Yeah, I mean I've spoken to some, and there has been sort of, people just turning up and doing whatever's needed, but that sounds really structured.

P: Which has also been my experience of talking to other people in other projects, and visiting other projects, and helping out with them and that's why when I kind of got to know these people here I was really surprised by how coordinated they are and I think it's down to transition, I think that's the origin there.

I: Yeah, and so will you normally do the same volunteering activity throughout the day or will you, sort of, transition between different...do a bit of this and a bit of that?

P: Okay, umm I suppose first thing, if you spoke to anyone else from [redacted] they would probably say the same thing. I don't consider myself a volunteer. *I: Yep okay* Like at all. So we think of ourselves as members, we are, as it were, paid up official owners of a cooperative, and so everybody has that status and that's very much how we think of it, so we don't really consider, and I suppose there are some people who might say something different, but I don't consider that I am volunteering for a project that I don't see a benefit from as such, umm for me this is about collectively, with a group of other people, producing our own food and demonstrating that by doing that this is a viable, umm, resilient food system, or a contribution to the national food system. And so, its perhaps a slightly different relationship than volunteering, but yes in terms of what I would do, that's driven by the needs of the crops that we are growing on our plot on a week-by-week basis. So, for example, at the moment we are growing spinach, perpetual spinach, rainbow chard, courgettes, squashes, potatoes, and so the first thing we would do on arrival is get together and have a chat, we have a team leader who coordinates us and allocates tasks, and we would normally harvest whatever it is that we are contributing to the shop that day, so it would normally be spinach, or perpetual spinach, or chard at the moment, that will be done by a couple of people. And then there might be some weeding, there might be some watering, there might be some... you know banking up the potatoes, there might be planting some new squash that someone has found somewhere are we've got a bit of space for, and so the tasks will simply be allocated as they need to be done, and then in addition my team has an email group that we use during the week. And our team leader gives us an update mid-week what needs to be done over the next week and then if people are coming in at different times which of course they are at the moment because of COVID 19, they know what's the most important activity to do, what task do we priorities, and not today because it's been pouring with rain but we have a water Rota in the summer as well and again, organized on a team basis, umm and so we just organize amongst ourselves to water our plots once or twice a week

I: Okay, oh cool.

P: The is a lot of variety and a lot of generally getting to chat to each member of the team

I: Yes, that sounds like a really nice group effort. *P: it is yeah*. And so, what has your experience been with working with other at the farm, are you quite close with the members of your team?

P: So, the one thing I am aware of is that because of our team system, I know my team really well, you know we spend a morning together a week at least if not more. But I don't have as much interaction with other

members at the farm, which is a bit of a shame sometimes, I mean obviously we do chat to, or see how people are doing but we don't spend that much time together so the dynamics with our team are lovely. I think in many ways I have probably been really lucky. We've got a really relaxed team leader who likes to, dare I say it, govern by consensus rather than by telling us what to do, which is a good way to work with a team and you know it's a really nice opportunity to work with like-minded people who all have different interests and skills and experiences, you know we are often swapping recipes, or discussing politics or, you know having a chat about something else and so it's a really nice combination of skill sharing and a social opportunity while also growing food and deciding what to do with that, so socially its lovely, you know we are quite diverse ages, we have quite diverse backgrounds, and occasionally we will do something socially outside the team, not that frequently but occasionally we've got a few members that run a bridge group so some of us have gone along to that before, we've had a shared dinner before Christmas that was really nice so, you know things like that which are outside the farm.

I: Yep, oh nice, *laughs* my next question was going to be do you meet up outside the farm, and so then presumably you get a share of the produce, is that only from your plot or do you get it form the different plots?

P: No its from everything and that's why it works so individual teams grow their crops, harvest, look after their crops, and put them in the shop but then everybody can buy from that shop and I use the word shop very loosely so we are generally harvesting in crates or baskets and they get put in that central place and I'm happy to take some pictures f you would like coz that would probably help *I: oh yeah that would be good* so they get put out in a central place and then we have an honesty system for buying things. Most produce is not limited depending on the season, but it is sold by weight, the prices are set by a combination of the committee and the team leaders. It's supposed to be about 30% cheaper than commercial retail but it's not, it's a lot, lot less so I'm not quite sure where that dynamic comes in but essentially we can buy whatever we think we could reasonably use as a stakeholder, as a member some things are certainly rationed, especially at the beginning and end of the season, so for instance we might get asked, just take a punnett of soft fruit once a month at first or every 2 weeks or we might be limited to half a kilo of rhubarb, you know for a couple of weeks because it's not producing very much. You know the most amusing limitation I saw was 4 spring onions per stakeholder on one occasion *both laugh* but last year. I have to say I had my 4 spring onions, and they were delicious *both laugh again* so that was limited, umm, so yeah it can be but generally it is take a reasonable amount. Officially I think in our articles of association we are limited to something like 1/120th of the produce, which is they technical number of stakeholders, but in reality, nobody is checking, and it all seems to work out generally fine ... I imagine like most groups we self-managed. So, if you see that there's only a certain amount of produce, you take a certain amount and then if there is more left over after everybody seems to have done their shopping and there's something left and you want a bit more, then it's fine to go back. So, I think we are generally grown up. *both laugh*

I: Yeah.

P: So, I've never seen any fights over the last carrot that sort of thing, but you know the rest definitely a case where if it's the first harvesting of a produce, yeah it will go quickly and you, you've kind of got to think, well work within the system. We know roughly that, for instance the shop is supposed to open at 10 o'clock on a Saturday, you know if you are late there will be less choice, if you are standing there at 5 minutes to and trying to grab the first lettuce that's not very *I: yeah* collaborative and you will probably get a few frowns.

I: Okay so it's kind of up to the members to self-manage?

P: Yeah, there's no kind of box scheme, it's not portioned up or anything like that, people bring their own back, they bring their own storage items, I can't imagine a system where we would portion things up because of course, you know, a couple have done more work and are contributing twice to what I am as an individual and yet we would probably still take a punnett of strawberries, does that make sense. So yeah, things are officially apportioned but in reality, I think it's more about a self-managed system.

I: Yeah, that's quite nice, that's a nice way of doing it.

P: And the payment is an honesty box basis, so the prices are all on a board, there's often a conversation about what exactly is this, is this one thing or is this another? What type of spinach is this and there's prices and then it's just put the money in a tin.

I: Yep, yeah okay that's good.

P: Which is there during the week as well, so even if the farm is not, even if there's nobody there, there will be a tin with a few coins in so that you could harvest something and put the money in yourself.

I: Okay and so what do you think of the quality and the taste of the food in comparison to supermarket food? Do you get sort of a mix of both?

P: So, I don't not anymore, well that's not strictly true, I buy very very little fruit and vegetables from the supermarket anymore, which was always my aim, when I joined the farm, I was hoping to be able to eat only what we were farming. Occasionally out of season I would buy a punnett of tomatoes or a cucumber or something like that but generally speaking for the last 2 years I have only eaten what's at the farm, it's meant its incredibly seasonal, driven literally by what we can grow, so the first winter to spring I remember eating, pretty much only cavallo Nero *I: laughs* from the farm just coz we had *lots* of that and not a lot else *both laugh* you know there wasn't (I'm exaggerating a little bit) but there wasn't a huge amount of variation over that first winter and I thought yeah this is a really good indication of what it means to eat sustainably and from a local market, because if you can't grow it you don't eat it, and I haven't really changed that. So, I try to eat just what we have, and it does mean that its, it's not necessarily your typical, varied shop that people have become really used to you now where you can buy raspberries in the middle of, I don't know, at the opposite season and you can get something from the southern hemisphere. And I'm just not eating like that anymore. So, I brought you a few things that I thought you might like to see *I: Oh Yeah* just to give you an indication. So, we have gotten, can you see this *holds up large basket of what look like big leaves the size of a long dinner plate*. This is perpetual spinach, so it's basically like a chard, with a big fat stem, *I: yeah* we are growing this at the moment. So, I seeded, harvested, looked after and picked this and now it's in my kitchen which is really lovely. That is a pretty big bag as you can see *I: yeah, that's enormous* but that's pretty much the only vegetable that I have picked up this week. So, I've got quite a big bag of it, but I haven't got anything else. Umm there were a few other vegetables, but I was busy doing something on our plot and I didn't get to pick them up, so I didn't get any. I did get a punnett of strawberries though which were a little bit soft and so I made them into a quick jam with some sugar and chia seeds. *holds up a pot of brightly colored jam* now you can't smell this, but they are, it smells gorgeous, it basically smells like vanilla and strawberries, but it is just strawberries, sugar and chia seeds. So those are the two things that I picked up at the farm this week. Last week, or the week before I made some elderflower cordial, because we have elderflowers all around the farm which were designed to be a harvesting hedge, I suppose, so its interspaces with apples and various other things, and herbs we have in abundance *holds up a bunch of herbs* and you can see this very easily, this is a somewhat dried bunch because I'm drying them but I've picked some rosemary some thyme and I've got some fennel and so I pick up herbs almost every week which are just a free for all umm so we can have as many as we want. So that's just what I've got at the moment, and I'm drinking a mint tea from our mint herbs as well. So, some weeks are a little bit, limited, but then in a few weeks' time, for instance, I know that probably by, what mid-June, we are going to have an abundance of things and the quantity will just be fantastic. The quality is lovely umm to know it's all grown on organic principles, we don't put anything on it other than a kind of a maxi crop which, I don't know if you've heard of that is made out of seaweed as a plant food and we make our own plant food by drowning our pernicious weeds as well and that goes on as a plant food as we make our own plant food by drowning our pernicious weeds as well, and that goes on as a plant food. So that's the only thing that's been added so everything is really fresh and tasty, yeah definitely the way to eat. you just have to get used to the seasonal lack of variation at times. And get really good at preserving and keeping things when they are in abundance.

I: Do you think you have done more of the learning about preserving things, sort of, you were saying with the strawberries, do you think you have learnt more of that throughout your participation, or do you think that was something you had before?

P: I would say no because I had definitely done a lot of it before, but I have definitely done more of it because of the way in which I am getting fruits and vegetables now. So, my family have always done loads of that,

we've always dried things, preserved them, you know, pickled them, done everything else with them but now I'm at the stage where if I get a crop. For instance, if we get basil, we grow enough basil at the farm for people to make pesto, so it's in huge quantities. So, whereas in the past, as much as I love pesto, I would never have bought that much commercially because it would have cost a fortune, we can get bunches at the farm which are like this for, you know, a couple of pounds, so yes, I absolutely make a lot more now. Onions was a fun thing, and I wish I had some to show you, but when we harvested our onions in autumn last year, we had, probably 2500 onions at the farm harvested in one go, which is enough for our farm community to have onions for a fair few month. They get dried for about, I don't know, 3 weeks? 4 weeks? in our drying areas and then the community just gets told, look take the onions home, we've got no space to keep them at the farm so you just have to have them, so, we had bowls of onions which would have lasted us for weeks and I had them sitting in my living room. And they lasted fine, I didn't preserve them in any way but it's just having that volume. But we also had shallots, which we then plaited into big plaits like this *I: Oh wow* and I had a plait of shallots hanging in my kitchen for probably 6 months until I used the last one.

I: Oh, my goodness.

P: Yeah so, I'm doing a lot more of that and its really nice to be able to do that, and do it for a reason, rather than just think, well I'll just make jam because I like it, I do like it about, it's about actually we are doing this, and we are pickling things more, and we are sharing recipes on that because we have to prolong the value of the food.

I: Yes, yeah really, I guess a really nice way of doing it. And what do you think of the experience of when somethings been out of season and it first comes into season, what do you think of that?

P: Well, that's lovely, I mean I don't know if you do any growing like this, I'm assuming you do because you are interested in it really but there's a real sense of the value of it, and it's a real privilege to have it. I mean, you know, the strawberries last week, this week, were genuinely because they were the first strawberries of the season, and most of us haven't had any yet, even though they have probably been in the shops for week, from you know northern Scotland hopefully. So, there's a real sense of the value of the produce. We might not have as much, or it might be really variable what we get and when we get it, but it's that much more valuable. And it think, certainly I feel that sense of, I've seeded that, I've grown that, I've got it here as produce, I know the effort and the work that goes into it, which, I think when you purchase something in the supermarket, it's really dislocated, you know, that link between the farmer and the growing and the consuming, is totally broken, I mean and that's probably the reason why so many of us are interested in, you know certainly the food related side of sustainability. But yes, it's much more precious. I mean I would actually say that the strawberries probably weren't even the best example, rhubarb was the best example, because that came in much earlier. We had that in about February, March? Umm and that was the first fruit of the year and that was really exciting, *laughs* We were all eating crumbles for about 6 weeks and then I think we thought, they are really not that healthy we can't eat that much more *both laugh*.

I: Yeah, I guess when you have that much you have got to be like well, I remember when me and my mum used to go blackberrying and it was like, you would just have loads and for weeks you would just be having crumbles *laughs*.

P: Well exactly, and freezers, I mean I've got all sorts of stuff in my freezer, I mean I've got broad beans from the last few weeks in the freezer, I've even got some of last year's redcurrants left in a small bag that occasionally go on my porridge, because they are not ready yet this year, not quite anyway. And so yeah, they are kind of special and you generally get a bit excited like 'I haven't had that for a while' that's amazing.

I: Yeah, yeah that's amazing, it's interesting when you think about the timing of things and the seasonality. And so, you said that you working in, your job is in sustainability, so has that always been something that you have been interested in, or have your thoughts on sustainability and things changed since you have joined [redacted]?

P: Okay, yes, I've worked in it for a long time, and as I said to you earlier, I'm sort of in the communications and marketing side, I'm between jobs at the moment, but generally speaking yes, I'm in the promotion, encouragement, engagement side. I wouldn't say that my views on sustainability itself have fundamentally

changed but what has become really apparent to me is the need for involving the broader public in human scale demonstration. Because that makes the difference, I think, and, you know, those of us who have worked in it and studied it have long held this view that sustainability as a concept is really abstract for a lot of people, and it feels like it's too big, it feels like it's something that has to be done on a global basis, a country basis, an industry basis, and that as individuals we can have only limited impact. And that's absolutely not true, and I know that there's been a lot of change, perhaps in the last 5-10 years with people looking more at lifestyle changes. But what I have really notices since joining [redacted] is the value in having a really successful project that genuinely shows people who are perhaps just dipping their toe into this idea, how, how beneficial it is, how positive it is, and how easy it is, and that it's not this really strange abstract concept where you have to give up everything that you love in order to be, you know, a complete activist based vegan who only works on an organic farm, you know, it doesn't need to be that extreme, and because for some people that's far, far too much. For example, I recently recruited 2 of my neighbors to join me at the farm, they regularly saw me on a Saturday, kind of laden down with my bags and things and looking very muddy I think *I: laughs*. And we would stop, and chat and I would explain to them what I was doing out in the middle of the rain and all that and they said to me the other day. “Oh, we are actually really keen to know more, could we come and have a look around”. So, you know, I showed them round and we got them down and they really loved it and they've never really done anything like that before. I think maybe the most they've done is a bit of pick your own type thing, and they were really genuinely excited and so now they are members *I: Oh wow* and I don't think they would have come at it had we been out actively promoting a sustainability message, in fact we don't even actively promote the farm that hard, it’s done through word of mouth. But yeah, I think having that, almost the, I don't quite know what the word is, almost having the, you know the beacon project. Those projects that work really well that are quite established that they've worked out a lot, the nooks and the cranks in the project have found a system that works within the community that can be heralded as this. Not as this showcase projects to say that it should be done this way but that are examples that can genuinely inspire people. That’s what I've taken away from this experience, is the value of that. And, and that's really positive, I think.

I: Yeah. Yeah no, definitely, that's a really interesting way of looking at it. And so, does [redacted] have any educational programmes incorporated into it or is it more just...

P: Broadly no. Which isn't to say that there isn't anything, but the, the focus of the project and the aim of it is to provide food for the members *I: right* for the participating members. So, it's not got a broad educational remit, it's a farm. First and foremost. However, that said, like most good projects, we do have schoolchildren who come to visit sometimes, when it's not covid-19. We do show people around, who are interested. There are members who go and deliver talks, you know, we don't have events or open days as such, but if people are interested, they can certainly be educated. But it's on an informal basis, it’s not a really formalized part of the project. I know there's been discussions about whether we should do more of it. But I think that's still ongoing because it would change the focus and there's a, there's almost a, purity is not the right word, but there's a singularity about it at the moment, which is to say, you know, we know what were good at, we know what's working, and what's working is us being a demonstration farming project. You know, we show that this model works here, and we invite people to join us and be part of it, you know that is completely open but were not actively trying to go and put ourselves forward as part of these projects. I'm just saying that I think that there's potential for that *I: laughs*.

I: Yep, yeah, that's interesting. Well, I think that that is all of my questions, oh I was going to ask you about, the crossover, do you buy any of your dried food and stuff at supermarkets. What is your relationship with those more...?

P: So other things? *I: yep* Yeah, so umm, I try to live as lightly as I can, pragmatically, I mean I've been a vegetarian for years, I've worked for the vegetarian society, so I'm quite interested in the broader food industry, not just fruit and veg. So yes, I do try to buy in bulk where I can, things like sumac, and dried purchases and try to get them as ethically as I can. I haven't yet used any of the new, sort of, dried food stores. I know there's a couple in the area, but they are quite a long way away and I was a bit torn with the idea of, oh it sounds great to go and get that you know packaging free, you know, get my dry goods there. But you know if I'm driving 40 miles to do it, that's not very sustainable. So, I haven't done that. So yeah, I do use supermarkets occasionally, generally the coop and you know, but yeah. That's an aspect of my food and purchasing that I could certainly be more ethical on, but I live alone and so I'm very aware that the best options are to be able

to do bulk purchasing and to be able to do it ideally as a larger group, and then it's brilliant and I've been involved in groups before that have done that and have bought it collectively. I don't have that here, but you are right, maybe it's something at the farm that we can thing about actually, because there would be enough of us to be interested.

I: Mm yeah, well thank you for your insights and everything. Is there anything else that you would like to mention at all that you think would be interesting?

P: Umm, no well I mean the only thing that struck me when I read your initial questions, and I've mentioned it about being a member is to look at the legal status of these different projects which you may well be doing anyway. But just because my sense is that that will indicate quite a different relationship, that the people who are involved have with it, whether, they are members of a co-operative, whether they are volunteers in a project that's actually got some other primary focus, that sort of thing, and I suspect there's quite a lot of variation, but what I've seen when I've looked elsewhere at projects like this is that they are often more what you would call the classic Community Supported Agricultures, where they are either a business, or an organization that is inviting the community to kind of come and work and learn, and then walk away with not much else. And I think that's what fundamentally different that I've seen here in amongst all the projects that I've been involved in over the years, is that this feels like a collectivist, or a collective project, rather than one for which a number of us are assisting, if that makes sense.

I: Yeah so, so it's more from the, I guess from the bottom up, more of a...

P: It feels it, because I mean we have an AGM where you know we can go and we can question our committee and we can check what we think about our finances and we can propose activities and there's a series of committees that are responsible for different things, so it feels more bottom up. I mean don't get me wrong the committee are really clear in what they want to do and have a lot of experience, they are very organized, we have said that already. But there's a sense that, you know, I could go along and say actually what I really think we should be doing is this, and they would probably say put a group together, and kind of come up with a proposal, put it to them. Which was something that our team initiated actually last year, in looking to try and get rid of single use plastic on the farm *I: Oh yeah? * because we still did have some, things like seed trays, that sort of thing. And so, a group of us put together and you know that is now driving it. So yeah, it feels much more bottom up than other projects I've seen.

I: Oh yeah, that's really interesting actually.

P: Quite an interesting thing to look at.

I: Yeah, no that's the thing it's such a, it's such a multifaceted subject I think that there are many angles you can look into and I think the more, I think that's been the struggle with this project is that how broad it's been in finding a... *both laugh* an angle, yeah but no that's really interesting side actually which I hadn't thought of.

P: Can I just ask your motivations for doing this, I mean if that's alright to ask that as part of your research to ask that question, what's sort of driven your interest in this and where do you think that might lead.

I: Well, [redacted] My degree was in geography and so developed an interest in sustainability and so all of that kind of came together to sort of form this. So yeah, I'm quite interested in looking at how, yeah getting physically involved can help and the different perspectives and thinking differently. And as you say, your neighbors coming to actually see the farm for themselves and how that has, sort of, engaged them in it.

P: Yeah, I think, I mean this is probably an aspect that you will look at but, how do people sort of self-define themselves, perhaps before getting involved in the projects, you know I don't know whether there's an option to ask people to sort of grade their environmental awareness or in some way either quantitatively or qualitatively, but I get the feeling, certainly at [redacted] And this might not necessarily be true, but my sense

is that the vast majority of members, and I count myself in this, had an interest in sustainability before coming to the project. [I: right] Yes there are people who come into it just interested in the food, but I don't think that's the majority at the moment, umm... so there's perhaps a question there to the degree that we could use those projects to try and encourage members who are less interested.

I: yeah, it's a...

P: There's probably pros and cons to either side and there's a question as to whether we should even do that.

I: Yeah, it's an interesting one to look at, and also just how the, the different structures of the groups. Because at first, I was just looking specifically at Community Supported Agriculture but then, sort of looking around at many of the farms it's such a broad, there's so many different models, each one works in a different way and they have different benefits and shortcomings in what the different members find and so it's quite interesting seeing how those models work.

P: Yeah, that's what struck me actually, is how different some of the structures are and what the pros and cons are... I mean I should have mentioned this earlier but one of the things that always strikes me at the farm. We were talking about the costs of things, if I spend 2 pounds a week, I feel like I've been really indulgent. Like it is so cheap, [I: oh my gosh] and yeah so, I typically don't spend 2 pounds a week on my fruit and vegetables. Now what I showed you this week was obviously quite limited so that wasn't very much, but you know in the summers when I can have, you know, a full tables worth of produce for the week and I'm usually not spending more than a couple of pounds, I think we are underestimating, perhaps the financial benefits [yes] and the environment, you know and the economic benefits that go alongside all the environmental and social ones, and I think that if more people were aware of that I think that they might be more inclined to get involved.

I: Yeah, yeah, no that that's a really good point. Thank you so much for answering all my questions.

P: Well, that was a bit of a brain dump of all my thoughts on [redacted] but yeah good luck with all your research it sounds fascinating and I'm sure that [redacted]s already said but we would be really interested to know what comes out of it all at the end. You have a submission that you are able to share more widely I'm sure that the people would be interested at the farm.

I: No of course I will definitely let you know my findings.

- End of transcript -

Appendix 6: Directive Template

Summer 2020 Directive: Your experiences with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Dear Participant:

I wanted to start by sincerely thanking you for taking part in this directive. The time and effort that you put into this will be invaluable to me and will make a significant contribution to the vital research that is going into exploring new ways of feeding our population. Without this contribution, this piece of research would not be able to proceed and so I would like to express my appreciation for your involvement.

This directive focuses on your experiences and memories of volunteering in a CSA farm. The material will contribute to Postgraduate Research which examines the role of CSAs in promoting environmental engagement and care within communities. If you would prefer to have an online interview, please respond to the email below.

I would like to note that the following should *not be treated as questions to an answer* but as prompting questions to get you started. I hope that you will think of responses which go far beyond what are suggested as the prompts. Please feel free to include photos or any other media which you think might be of interest to this project. You may write as much or as little as you like, and any thoughts, feelings or views that you are able to provide will be very valuable to this research.

Please do not identify yourself or other people within your reply. It is best to use initials instead of real names. All information provided by you will be anonymised and treated in strict confidence under the ethical guidelines of the University of Bristol. Once the research has been completed the information will be destroyed in a safe and secure manner. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Professors [redacted], whose contact details may be found on the University of Bristol website.

Please return to [redacted]. Thank you for your help, time and effort.

Part 1: How you came to be part of the CSA.

Tell me a bit about yourself and how you came to be part of the CSA; what made you want to join the CSA; and for how long have you been involved?

Topics you might consider in your response:

- *Recollections of your first experience*
- *Sights, smells, sounds that come to mind*
- *How your involvement in CSA has changed since your first experience*
- *A description of a typical day of volunteering at the CSA.*

Part 2: Sustainability.

What does sustainability mean to you?

Topics you might consider in your response:

- *How have your thoughts on sustainability changed since joining the CSA?*
- *Does the farm have any educational programmes? What is your involvement in them?*
- *Has being involved in CSA had any effects on your wider approach to sustainability?*

Part 3: Farm Community

Please describe your involvement with the farm.

Topics you might consider in your response:

- *Your experiences of working with others at the farm and your relationships with them in and outside the farm*
- *Do you buy food from the farm and how has being involved in the farm changed the way you shop?*
- *What do you think about the quality and taste of the food produce?*

Part 4: Shopping experiences

Please describe what it is like to get your food from a CSA. What do you see as the benefits and negatives of participating?

Topics you might like to consider:

- *Sights, smells and textures of the food*
- *Your interactions while getting your food from the CSA*
- *A description of collecting a vegbox, or visiting the farm shop, or otherwise*

Thank you for your help.

Appendix 7: Directive Response

Summer 2020 Directive: Your experiences with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

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This directive focuses on your experiences and memories of volunteering in a CSA farm. The material will contribute to Postgraduate Research which examines the role of CSAs in promoting environmental engagement and care within communities. If you would prefer to have an online interview, please respond to the email below.

I would like to note that the following should *not be treated as questions to an answer* but as prompting questions to get you started. I hope that you will think of responses which go far beyond what are suggested as the prompts. Please feel free to include photos or any other media which you think might be of interest to this project. You may write as much or as little as you like, and any thoughts, feelings or views that you are able to provide will be very valuable to this research.

Please do not identify yourself or other people within your reply. It is best to use initials instead of real names. All information provided by you will be anonymised and treated in strict confidence under the ethical guidelines of the University of Bristol. Once the research has been completed the information will be destroyed in a safe and secure manner. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Professors [redacted], whose contact details may be found on the University of Bristol website.

Please return to [redacted] Thank you for your help, time and effort.

Part 1: How you came to be part of the CSA.

Tell me a bit about yourself and how you came to be part of the CSA; what made you want to join the CSA; and for how long have you been involved?

I'm in my early thirties and work as a scientist at a local R&D firm specialising in materials research and battery technology. I've been interested in the environment and looking after it since at least

my early 20s, and have always loved the countryside having grown up there and in a family where being outside and making things outside and working on outdoor projects was important. I've always had an interest in the natural world too.

I first heard about [redacted]) as it's often called through a flyer at a local zero waste shop and decide that it was right up my street. I was looking for a community to be a part of where I could be involved based on common interest and working together, so [redacted] seemed worth trying out. I think working together towards a common goal is a key way to get to know others and build mutual respect, and being outdoors is very healthy and worthwhile. I've only been involved for four months so am a relative newbie, and a good part of that has been in lockdown so things haven't been very normal just yet.
My first experience was very positive – the community is very friendly and vibrant. Especially on a (normal) Saturday morning there are a lot of people involved and all working hard, though with plenty of opportunity to chat. I started by being a 'Roamer' – joining a different team each week depending upon what needed doing, but I have now just joined a fixed team. I was draw to this one because it is experimenting with new techniques – in particular No dig and permaculture methods. I like the idea of researching the best way to do things, and had been looking into some of these techniques myself so getting to learn about them first hand seemed like a great idea.
On a typical day, I'll come along in the morning for a couple of hours until around midday and get involved with whatever needs doing. Recently that has been weeding and watering. It used to be that on a Saturday we would break for notices and a chat at 11am which was a good time to have a longer conversation, but in recent months that hasn't been possible.

Topics you might consider in your response:

- *Recollections of your first experience*
- *Sights, smells, sounds that come to mind*
- *How your involvement in CSA has changed since your first experience*
- *A description of a typical day of volunteering at the CSA.*

Part 2: Sustainability.

What does sustainability mean to you?

My thoughts on sustainability have changed over the years. Ultimately, I still think it is about living collectively in a way which maintains a balance whereby both humanity and the natural world can flourish. Where we don't extract so many resources, damage so much of nature and emit so many pollutants that wildlife can't adapt and the environment breaks down. I went through a period where I thought that was achieved by individuals changing their habits, learning to sacrifice the high-resource lives we live, and prioritising the environment in all our decisions. While I still think that has a huge part to play, I have begun to think that human nature just doesn't work like that and that even if there are a few people who are able to do that the majority will prioritise the immediate needs of today over the big, apparently far-off crisis of tomorrow. So I have begun to think that creating a world which takes human nature into account, and alters the systems we use everyday (energy, farming, environmental legislation etc) to be more sustainable – meaning having an effect upon the environment which isn't damaging – is key. Sustainability primarily means creating a society which can live indefinitely in harmony with the environment. It means legislating in a way which protects habitats, promotes corporate responsibility towards all stakeholders, builds non-polluting energy systems etc and does it all in a way which can grow with normal people making

relatively manageable choices – if it is hard for everyone all the time then people won't do it, so it has to includes economic sustainability and secondary motivations/benefits.

I've had a couple of chats with people on the farm about environmental issues and sustanability and it has been good to be encouraged by like minded people. However, I don't think my general thoughts have been significantly altered by HCF. I have become slightly more aware about local issues, and the need to be involved in such things in order to make a difference.
I think the farm does do some outreach with schools which I haven't been involved with yet, though I'm hoping to connect some of my school teacher friends who have shown an interest to the farm with a view to doing a schools visit.

Topics you might consider in your response:

- *How have your thoughts on sustainability changed since joining the CSA?*
- *Does the farm have any educational programmes? What is your involvement in them?*
- *Has being involved in CSA had any effects on your wider approach to sustainability?*

Part 3: Farm Community

Please describe your involvement with the farm?

I've met several 10s of people on the farm, and would find it easy to have a good conversation with several people. I've talked to around 10 people more than once in reasonable depth. Recent events have disrupted building relationships, but I expect the relationships will continue growing when things are back to normal.
I have spoken to one or two of the other members outside of the farm, but only know one member in a different context. On the farm there are a variety of people – some who have a good deal of knowledge who are often teaching or facilitating others, some who lead and come up with ideas and projects, and a good number who are more happy to get stuck in and complete the tasks required.
I do buy the produce which is fantastic value, generally good quality though often mixed quality compared to the supermarket, the taste is usually very good even if appearance is not always perfect– it's very exciting to be able to pick it myself! My shopping habits haven't changed too drastically, but I anticipate in the summer this will change as more produce becomes available. There are a few fruit an veg such as Rhubarb, beetroot, chard and broad beans which I have been able to get at the farm so no need to buy at the supermarket.

Topics you might consider in your response:

- *Your experiences of working with others at the farm and your relationships with them in and outside the farm*
- *Do you buy food from the farm and how has being involved in the farm changed the way you shop?*
- *What do you think about the quality and taste of the food produce?*

Part 4: Shopping experiences

Please describe what it is like to get your food from a CSA. What do you see as the benefits and negatives of participating?

It is a good feeling to get food which you know you have helped to produce. So far none of my crops have been harvested so it will be exciting when that happens and I'm looking forward to it.
Picking food yourself makes you think about it differently, and means that there is more of a complete story behind it when you eat it. One thing I've particualrly noticed is how much water can be needed to prepare a crop, and that has helped me to think seriously about the problems this must cause farmers.
Benefits – being part of a community; working together on a project; working on something with practical value; getting to know people and make friends; opportunity to work outside; the community promotes living with the natural world; shopping is very sustainable as encourages no plastic, food is local, seasonal and almost completely organic
Negatives – the project doesn't really solve a problem, most people involved have all they need so this is more of a hobby than making a real difference to the world; time is taken away from other projects which are more regenerative

Topics you might like to consider:

- *Sights, smells and textures of the food*
- *Your interactions while getting your food from the CSA*
- *A description of collecting a vegbox, or visiting the farm shop, or otherwise*

Thank you for your help.

Appendix 8: Social Media Posts

Date	Message	Analysis
17th March	[redacted] DAYS CANCELLED. In light of the latest government advice, we have decided to cancel our lambing days on 21st and 28th March. The current plan is that the farm, farm shop, cafe, pizza and barbecue will all continue to open as normal, but it is a fast-moving situation, so please watch this space for more updates. Our top priority at the moment is meeting your food needs in the farm shop. Please be nice to our shop staff because they are working very hard to keep up at the moment! Thank you.	Attempts to maintain community and still supply food needs but crucial attempts to discourage mass gatherings at the farm. Still maintaining priorities to keep open food provisions. No mention of impacts for volunteer days
19th March	We are facing unprecedented demand for fresh meat at the moment. To give our butchers time to catch up, we have decided to that the butcher's counter will only be open from noon each day until further notice. The shop will be open normal hours (from 9.00) each day, and we will endeavour to have a good range of meat ready-packed in the fridge each morning to keep you supplied until the counter opens at noon. And remember to be nice to our shop staff and our butchers - they are working under a great deal of pressure at the moment. Thank you!	Evidence of increased demand for fresh meat, the butchers counter is open at altered time. Still maintaining that the shop is open – food provisioning. 'Remember to be nice' implies that some people have not been nice and they are under a lot of pressure to provide food supplies.
19th March	I'm sorry to announce that due to the current exceptional circumstances, we will now not be launching our pizza and barbecue season this weekend as we currently need to focus our resources on basic food supply. We are keeping the cafe open for food and drink, but we have moved some of the cafe tables away from the front of the shop to reduce crowding, and will be encouraging cafe customers to use the garden as much as possible. Please keep checking in with us, as this is a constantly moving situation, and thank you for your support during these challenging times.	Having to halt food preparation due to the need to focus on basic food supply. Café is still open but people encouraged to not crowd. Have a café garden so encouraging people to use this instead.
21st March	In response to the current exceptional circumstances, [redacted] is launching a local food delivery service for those in need. Given that demand in our shop is very high and supplies are limited at the moment, the initial offering will be limited in range and only delivered to nearby locations. Most importantly, this service is intended for those who are housebound, vulnerable, self-isolating or doing essential work that makes shopping impossible, not for everybody else please – we just don't have the capacity at the moment.	Launching local delivery – this advances them to many city-like veg box schemes – supplies are limited and to nearby people. Response to need for vulnerable ad unable individuals to make it possible.

24th March	Dear friends, Although a nationwide lockdown was declared last night, life goes on at The Farm. This week we'll be sending out nearly 1,000 veg boxes… that's almost double what we were delivering just 2 weeks ago! Obviously this is causing some operational growing pains and we're incredibly thankful for your trust and patience as we navigate this new territory. Difficult decisions have had to be made, some of which may have affected your orders, and for this we apologise. For instance, yesterday, without warning, we had to suddenly bring forward the order cut-off time for the week. We're very sorry if this took you by surprise, but it was a necessary measure to ensure we were not overwhelmed beyond our already stretched-to-the-limit capacity. We've also had to implement item limits to try and make sure that there's enough to go around for everyone. Substitutions may continue for a while as we cannot currently guarantee box contents; we may also run out of other products, for which you will not be charged or will receive a full refund. Hopefully, as we settle into these new rhythms, there will be fewer of these hiccups going forward. Again, thank you for your continued understanding, patience and support. We'll be sharing new updates here on an ongoing basis. Lockdown is going to be a difficult time for everyone. Please take care of yourselves and each other.	Massive increase in distribution on the farms which the farms have to adjust to in the instance of a pandemic. Impact on orders due to unprecedented rises in demands. Limit to the ordering capacity and time limits on items due to rise in demand and stretched capacity. Trying to feed as many people as possible so must substitute some items to ensure that there is enough for people so that they don't run out. Adjusting to the lockdown and working out what works for whom.
25th March	Please sign and share this petition calling for emergency support for small scale farmers and market gardeners so we can increase local food supply in the current crisis. Local food supplies are more important now than they've ever been and we're seeing first hand how people are struggling to get fresh food during this crisis - http://change.org./landarmysupport - Thank you!	Self-explanatory but also a route towards getting small and local growers on a map as a key for of food supply and to get the necessary support for this.
26th March	It's not just local box delivery services who have seen a huge increase in demand...thank you to all our customers once again for your patience during this time 💚 https://www.theguardian.com/…/uks-organic-vegetable-deliver…	Demonstration of the unprecedented demand that producers are facing in the face of this crisis.
26th March	Hey all! Remember the lovely team down at our shop in [redacted] are still working normal hours so if you're local do go and stock up on fresh fruit and veggies and daily dose of cheeriness! Opening hours are as follows: Tues-Thurs 10.30-6 Sat 8.30-4 Sun 11-3	Have a farm shop which remains open
27th March	The sweetest note left for one of our drivers this week- it's been hung up in our warehouse and has really boosted morale so a huge THANK YOU to the artist who created it we are truly grateful 😍	Brings it back to community in this weird time … where they seem to be one of the most commercial enterprises there is still a strong sense of community

Appendix 9: Participant Observation Consent Form

University of BRISTOL

Consent to take part in Research

I .... [redacted] ..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use my data, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and a verbal description of the study has been provided.
- I agree to being audio-recorded subject to a request from the researcher.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised quotes may be used in the dissertation.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained by the researcher until the results of the dissertation are confirmed.
- I understand that any notes and recordings in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for 2 years from the date of the exam board.
- I understand that under the freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of Research Participant

... [redacted] .... 19/2/20 .....

Signature of participant — Date

Signature of Researcher

..... [redacted] .... 19/2/20 .....

Signature of researcher — Date

University of BRISTOL

Consent to take part in Research

I [redacted] ..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use my data, in which case the material will be deleted.
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- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of Research Participant

[redacted] ..... 19/02/2020 .....

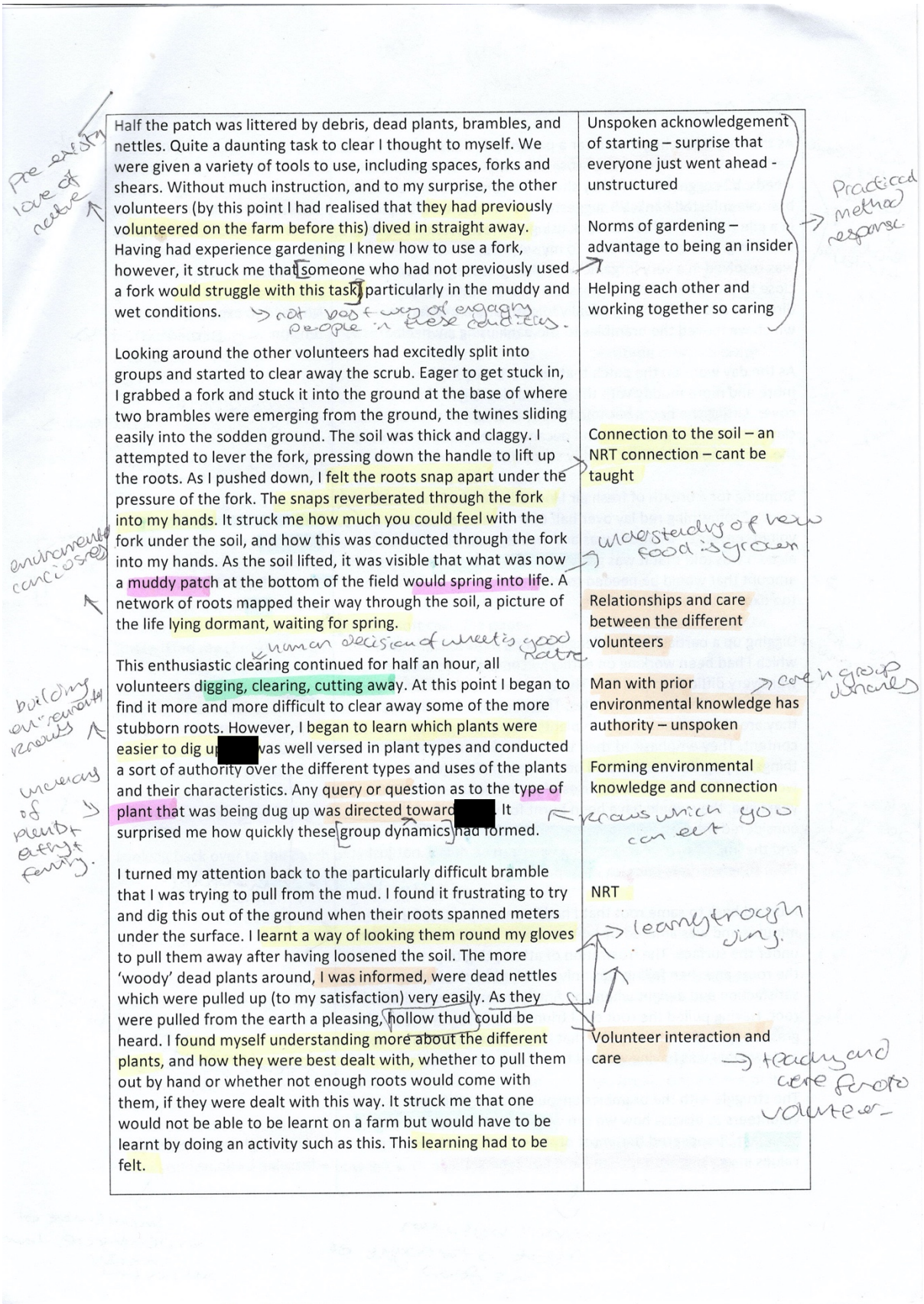
Signature of participant — Date

Signature of Researcher

[redacted] ..... 19/02/20 .....

Signature of researcher — Date

Appendix 10: Example of Thematic Coding and Memo Taking



Half the patch was littered by debris, dead plants, brambles, and nettles. Quite a daunting task to clear I thought to myself. We were given a variety of tools to use, including spaces, forks and shears. Without much instruction, and to my surprise, the other volunteers (by this point I had realised that they had previously volunteered on the farm before this) dived in straight away. Having had experience gardening I knew how to use a fork, however, it struck me that someone who had not previously used a fork would struggle with this task, particularly in the muddy and wet conditions.	Unspoken acknowledgement of starting – surprise that everyone just went ahead - unstructured Norms of gardening – advantage to being an insider Helping each other and working together so caring
Looking around the other volunteers had excitedly split into groups and started to clear away the scrub. Eager to get stuck in, I grabbed a fork and stuck it into the ground at the base of where two brambles were emerging from the ground, the twines sliding easily into the sodden ground. The soil was thick and claggy. I attempted to lever the fork, pressing down the handle to lift up the roots. As I pushed down, I felt the roots snap apart under the pressure of the fork. The snaps reverberated through the fork into my hands. It struck me how much you could feel with the fork under the soil, and how this was conducted through the fork into my hands. As the soil lifted, it was visible that what was now a muddy patch at the bottom of the field would spring into life. A network of roots mapped their way through the soil, a picture of the life lying dormant, waiting for spring.	Connection to the soil – an NRT connection – cant be taught
This enthusiastic clearing continued for half an hour, all volunteers digging, clearing, cutting away. At this point I began to find it more and more difficult to clear away some of the more stubborn roots. However, I began to learn which plants were easier to dig up. [redacted] was well versed in plant types and conducted a sort of authority over the different types and uses of the plants and their characteristics. Any query or question as to the type of plant that was being dug up was directed toward [redacted]. It surprised me how quickly these group dynamics had formed.	Relationships and care between the different volunteers Man with prior environmental knowledge has authority – unspoken Forming environmental knowledge and connection
I turned my attention back to the particularly difficult bramble that I was trying to pull from the mud. I found it frustrating to try and dig this out of the ground when their roots spanned meters under the surface. I learnt a way of looking them round my gloves to pull them away after having loosened the soil. The more 'woody' dead plants around, I was informed, were dead nettles which were pulled up (to my satisfaction) very easily. As they were pulled from the earth a pleasing, hollow thud could be heard. I found myself understanding more about the different plants, and how they were best dealt with, whether to pull them out by hand or whether not enough roots would come with them, if they were dealt with this way. It struck me that one would not be able to be learnt on a farm but would have to be learnt by doing an activity such as this. This learning had to be felt.	NRT Volunteer interaction and care

As the volunteers began to clear a particularly dense patch of nettles a slight disagreement arose as to where to dispose of the weeds [redacted] suggested that they should be thrown into the already bramble-infested ba[redacted] suggested that they should be placed in a pile then moved to the bank using a wheelbarrow to avoid them re-growing themselves. To my surprise, this disagreement was resolved in a very 'organic' way. As we moved from clearing close to the bank it was not possible to throw them in that direction and so the pile gradually migrated to a patch from which we moved the brambles to the bank using a wheelbarrow.

As the day wore on the patch that we were clearing became more and more muddy with the gradual clearing of the plant cover. Lifting the boots became harder and harder as the thick, clay-like mud clung to them and became caked around them. At the same I noticed a thick muddy smell start to appear in the air.

Stopping for a breath of fresh air I looked over the lake. A thin layer of something red lay over half of the lake. I asked the volunteer leader what this was and was informed that it was algae. I was told that it was gotten rid of by weevils, however, the amount that would be needed to get rid of the algae would be too expensive to make it viable.

Digging up a particularly challenging patch of nettles (the same which I had been working on earlier), I complained that they were very difficult to pull out. The volunteer coordinator remarked that they loved nettles. They explained excitedly that they are closer to animals than plants owing to their formic acid content. They emphasised their use in cooking and making things, saying that they should be harvested. They joked that if women had talked about the uses of plants besides food 200 years ago, they would have been burnt for witchcraft. I considered the lost environmental knowledge that we have now, and the importance of recognising what can be eaten, not just from supermarkets but also wild spaces.

I turned back to same root that I had been working on for 10 minutes and was amazed by how far some of the roots spanned under the surface. The frustration of attempting to get rid of all the roots and then failing was only matched by the feeling of satisfaction and delight when you finally managed to pull up a big root. Having pulled the root out I triumphantly threw it onto the grass heap. It was at this point that I became aware of how hot and sweaty I was having worked to pull out many weeds.

The struggle with the brambles encouraged the different volunteers to discuss how we can work with the land and not against it. It appeared that most of the volunteers showed similar values in working with the land and not against it.

Tensions in authority – routine and disruption - sense of a way that things are done – disrupting

No need to explicitly discuss tension → social norms

Potentially negative experiences.

Environmental education

Human definition of what is useful and not useful crafts their world

Seasonality and other uses for plants

Reward of volunteering and how it can engender these positive feelings

CSA role in bringing 'it' out

Children, education and care – learning by doing